

Mary Ann THE Tilgate

B A R O N E S S

OF

B E A U M O N T.

A NOVEL.

By A L A D Y.

A NARRATIVE founded on OBSERVATION. The object of it is a perfect Acquiescence in the Will of the great DISPOSER of Events: Whilst it shews VIRTUE in different Characters, it will, it is hoped, not be found destitute of AMUSEMENT and ORIGINALITY.

D U B L I N:

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1793.

My dear Sir

REAR ADMIRAL

FRANCIS MONTAGU



REAR ADMIRAL

FRANCIS MONTAGU

A MARINE FORCE OF 1000 MEN
HAS BEEN DESPATCHED TO THE
COAST OF AFRICA TO
PROTECT THE SHIPS OF THE
FLEET FROM THE ATTACK OF
THE ENEMY.

THE ADMIRAL

FRANCIS MONTAGU

REAR ADMIRAL

THE ADMIRAL

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BARONESS OF BEAUMONT.

IT was in the evening of a fine day in autumn, that the Baroness of Beaumont was beholding the beauties which the setting sun rendered still more enchanting: she was in a grotto that nature had formed in the side of a lofty hill; from it might be seen on one side the venerable remains of Beaumont-castle: the embattled walls and slender pinnacles, shewed it was built in that period of time, when our ancestors found they could live in safety without the protection of soldiers to guard their habitations; yet they retained the form and manner, though not the strength of the ancient fortresses: it was surrounded by a park, whose ivyed walls and aged oaks, plainly proved, that they were of the same date with the mansion. On

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the other side, the eye wandered over a large extent of well-cultivated country, bounded by a barren mountain, whose top was often covered by clouds. Down its side ran several small streams, which enriched the surrounding valley; proving to the caviller at nature, that however useless particular objects may appear, yet the wisdom of the divine Maker is evident in all.

The front commanded a view of the sea; it was a perfect calm; no noise was to be heard; but the gentle breaking of the surf on a sandy shore; its waves reflected the last beams of the bright orb of day, when in the opposite part of the heavens, the moon in full splendor rose. How much is that mortal to be pitied, who can behold such a sight without feeling the most elevated sensations! Such were those that filled the breast of the Baroness; whilst she was beholding it, the sun set in the bosom of the deep.

A sudden sigh broke from her; she returned to her house, reflecting on the loss of a fond husband, and an only son, who in the blossom of youth, was killed in a duel; the sudden shock was too much for the constitution of the Baron, who was just recovering from a severe illness—he relapsed—and and in a short time was



was laid in the same vault close by the remains of his beloved child.

Several years had passed since that fatal period, which had been spent by his lady in continual acts of true benevolence and hospitality : she had the firmest opinion, that this earth was only intended for a state of probation ; and she waited with the most christian hope, when she should resign her breath, to be blessed with the transport of beholding her husband and son. She now thought that period was drawing near, as she had been for some time indisposed, from a cold she had caught by sitting in a damp cottage, where she had acted the part of a divine as well as a charitable assistant, by endeavouring to prepare those to meet death with fortitude, whose bodies she supported with the most tender solicitude.

Her servants observed with concern, the altered looks of their lady, and besought her to consult a physician of eminence, who lived some miles from the castle : to oblige and make happy, was ever her delight ; she would not therefore refuse their request, and her old faithful butler was accordingly dispatched for him.

On his arrival, he was conducted to

the lady, through a lane formed by her domestics, who besought him to use his best skill to save their benefactress, which he assured them he would do from principle, as well as knowledge. When he considered the case of his patient, he told her, that physic was out of the question, that he was fearful her lungs were injured, and advised by all means an immediate change of climate, recommending her first to try the mild air of the South of France, and then spend the winter at Naples. She trembled when he proposed the last, as that was the place where her son lost his life; but a moment's reflection enabled her to assure the physician, she would strictly follow his advice, thanking him for his polite attention, which should not be owing to obstinacy in herself, if it did not meet with the wished-for success.

Every thing was soon prepared for her departure, and the day arrived on which she was to quit the castle; before she bid a final adieu to her tenants and servants, that were waiting to take a mournful farewell of her, she went, accompanied by her chaplain, to behold once more the spot where all that was dear to her remained: there she shed a torrent of tears, and felt the loss with more than

than usual violence: she besought her chaplain, not to let the poor feel any loss by her absence, and to let strangers be entertained with the usual hospitality: adding, I once hoped to have left a successor to have done honour both to the title and fortune: then falling on her knees, recommended herself to the care of heaven; and retired more calm than could have been expected from what she had suffered.

In the most affectionate manner she took leave of her dependants, and went on board a vessel that was waiting for her, followed by the prayers of her household. The chaplain had told them, it would be better for their lady not to see them too much affected, as it would imply a fear that they thought they should see her no more. The arguments of the good man had their effect, and their sorrow was decent; but when they could see her no more, they broke out into lamentations, which were once more appeased by his proposing to join in prayers for the health and safety of the Baroness: this they eagerly agreed to, and felt themselves more resigned to her absence.

The wind blew a favorable breeze, and they were in a few hours on the French coast, much to the satisfaction of the lady, who

who had been so ill during the passage, that it was doubtful whether she would have lived to have been landed ; by proper cordials and the most tender care, she recovered so much in a few days, as to be able to prosecute her journey. As every thing that could amuse was recommended to her, she omitted not to view whatever was curious either of the works of nature or art. She was fond of the fine arts, as well as the rude majesty of nature ; consequently, must have her thoughts employed as well as her time in the most gratifying manner. The strongest characters apparent in different men, under different laws, religions, and customs, she was careful to observe ; and though she could easily find errors in all, yet she oftener found occasion to commend, observing, that what to one nation was liberty, would to another be anarchy.

She made but a short stay at Paris, as the air was thought improper for her. After viewing the Royal palaces and public edifices, she hastened on for Montpellier, fearing she should lose the benefit of the season, if she deferred it any longer.

Here she soon arrived ; her health something improved, though she was greatly fatigued.

fatigued. As one of the best houses happened to be unoccupied, it was secured for her reception; the season and climate seemed to promise a renewal of health to which the serenity of her mind much contributed; for since the death of her child, she had never felt such a calm.

It was her custom, though a thorough member of the reformed religion, to attend the public service of the place she resided at, as she thought, where the object of both was the same Deity, that it was decent and proper to shew she loved the practice of Divine worship, by public as well as private devotion, gratifying her senses at the same time in the most innocent manner; for there her thoughts were elevated by the most melting music; her eyes delighted with the most captivating paintings, and most exquisite efforts of statuary, on subjects that were designed to inspire the beholders with a contempt of the vanities of this world, and prove an inducement to virtue and religion.

One day, whilst at the church of Notre Dame, her thoughts had been so much occupied, that she was insensibly left alone; the church was empty before she perceived it; on finding herself thus situated, she arose, with intent to depart; but was prevented by hearing a low voice say,

say, "Holy Father, propose something; be assured no false pride shall interpose to prevent my acceptance of an honest employment." A deep sigh succeeded these words. "My child," (answered the priest) "would to God my abilities were equal to my wishes, to be of benefit to you: it is needless to say I am poor; you well know it. Alas! how can I serve you?—I will try, however; and depend on it, a never-failing Providence will not desert you. Meet me this evening after vespers; I will think on what may be done:" they then separated. The Baroness returned home, determined if possible to be a means in the hand of Providence of rescuing an innocent being from oppression. This pleasing idea gave a cheerfulness to her countenance, and an appetite to her dinner, she had long wanted, and spread a joy through her whole family.

When the hour of vespers arrived she hastened to church, and placed herself in such a part of it as would command a view of the place where she heard the voice; she soon found it was occupied by a female in deep mourning: her form appeared elegant, but so much obscured by her cloak and calash, which in a manner covered her, that she could
distinguish

distinguish nothing certain of her shape, nor get a sight of her face. The service being over, on pretence of looking at a picture, the Baroness went into a side chapel, where she staid a short time, and coming from it, was obliged to pass close by the seat where the unfortunate lady was sitting: she was talking to an aged priest, with great earnestness; and on hearing the steps of a person near her, turned with haste to see who it was, and gave the Baroness by that means an opportunity of viewing her face; a more expressive one heaven never formed! She seemed about the age of eighteen; her complexion delicately fair; her light hair, which hung loose and disordered, flowed in curls down her neck; a faint blush spread over her a momentary bloom, which was instantly succeeded by a paleness that evidently showed the distress of mind under which she laboured: she just lifted up her eyes, which were of the brightest hazel, and immediately hid her face in her calash.

The Baroness hesitated a moment, how to address her,—then, as inspired by benevolence, thus spoke, “Lady, I have, since I came to church, been unhappily seized with a faintness, which prevented me from leaving the place on which I was

seated, and am hardly now able to support myself, my coach is at the door, but having no female attendant with me, am apprehensive of the disorder returning before I reach my house: will you do me the kindness to accompany me there, and my carriage shall afterwards convey you home: I am the Baroness of Beaumont."

The fair stranger looked at her director, for his approbation, who, with a transport of joy which sparkled in his eyes, told the Baroness, whom he well knew by name, that he hoped her illness would return no more; that his dear child should attend her, and if she should have occasion for her assistance, he was certain she would be of as much service as possible: adding,—
 Ah! my lady, she is a most promising blossom; would to God I could shelter her from every ill!" He then handed them into the carriage, and lifting up his eyes, seemed to implore the blessing of Heaven on them both.

They were soon at the Baroness's, who intreated the fair stranger to walk in with her—saying—that as she had so obligingly seen her home, she hoped it would prove the means of an intimacy. The fair one modestly replied, with a voice of great sweetness, "I am not worthy, Lady, of your friendship,—happy should
 I think

I think myself in the honour of it !"— They then walked into the saloon, which was kept temperate by shades, and a gentle murmuring of water, part of the river Merdanfum, which conveys to the inhabitants of Montpellier at once health and a perpetual refreshing coolness, which to a town so much exposed to the greatest force of the sun-beams, is a most precious blessing.

The Baroness ordered some refreshments to be brought, and desired the lady to sit down: the servants immediately returned with ices, cakes, and the choicest fruits; she persuaded her guest to partake of the repast; hardly had she tasted of the entertainment, which she swallowed with avidity, than she fell into strong convulsive fits: alarmed at her situation, the Baroness rung for her attendants, who removed her to another chamber: a physician was sent for, and the lady was laid on a bed: on his arrival, he ordered her to be put into a warm bath, observing that she appeared greatly emaciated: for some hours her life was not expected from one minute to another; towards morning, the fits were not so violent, and she was ordered to be kept perfectly quiet. She continued so ill for some days, that to remove her was impossible; nor did they
know

know where to take her, as she had uttered nothing but incoherent sentences, and they were expressive only of fear and terror: sometimes she would beg for mercy, then faintly scream, and relaps into a state of insensibility. Her senses in time were regained; the first token of which was, by enquiring how she came there, not perceiving the Baroness, who sitting by her bed-side, with the curtain drawn before her. "My child," answered the good Lady, "do not disturb yourself; you are in safe hands; when you are stronger, you shall be told all; and in return, I shall expect you will be as communicative: now, my dear, compose yourself, and you will soon be well."

She answered by a look of the most engaging sweetness, and soon after fell into a most profound sleep, which held her some hours: it was a critical one; for she had no fits after: her eyes daily regained their lustre, and the roses in her cheeks bloomed afresh. She was permitted to sit up some hours every day. Soon after, the Baroness took her an airing, informed her all that had happened; saying, that she would be happy the next morning to know who her guest was; but that she should not importune her till then.

The ride was delightful; the weather being

being uncommonly fine, she lengthened it rather more than usual, to enjoy the freshness of the evening breezes: the moon shone bright, and by its silver light discovered several pairs of fond couples, who were seated at the feet of large chestnut-trees. Their attention was soon after taken up with observing a party of peasants dancing at the door of a neat cottage: joy was visible in their countenances: all joined in the dance, except an aged man, who, seated in an elbow chair, was fondling an infant in his arms, keeping time to the music.—“Happy people,” exclaimed the Baroness, “you have lost no fond husband, no only child!” The tear of recollection dropped from her eye, and was answered by one from the sympathizing Violante, who at the same time breathed a sigh. They lost not the soft infection till the carriage stopped at the door, and they walked in with it still visible in their countenances.

Supper restored their spirits: they paid their duty to their Creator; then retired to peaceful slumbers.

After breakfast the Baroness told Violante, that if it would not fatigue her, she should now claim her promise.

“My dear Lady,” replied the bashful fair, “I will, as well as I am able, relate
to

to you the adventures, for so they may be called, of the most unhappy of her sex : From my earliest childhood, I have been the sport of fortune ; and, had not your goodness relieved me, ere this my miseries had ceased." A flood of tears stopped her speech : after a pause, she proceeded in these words.

" A priest, called Father Felix, returning to his convent in the city of Milan, one morning in the month of January, (it will, when the next arrives, be eighteen years) from a charitable visit to an adjoining village, where he had been to shrieve a poor man, who, from excessive fatigue, in trying to support a numerous family, had brought upon himself a malignant fever, and was, when he left him, at the point of death, surrounded by a wife and five young children. He was near his convent, when a young gentleman with a cloak under his arm, was rushing past him ; their eyes, however met, and the gentleman catching hold of his arm, thus spoke—in the utmost hurry and confusion :

" Good Father,—assist me, without asking any question : in this cloak is a female infant : take her to some good nurse for a few days : here is something to provide her present necessities." Then putting

putting the infant in his arms, gave him a purse of gold : " Let her be christened Violante : I will meet you this day week on this spot." So saying, he left the astonished priest in the utmost surprise : what should he do with the babe ! He recollected the good woman whose husband he had been with, was suckling one, whilst he was there, and hastened back to the cottage : when he came, he found the poor man released from all earthly wants : his wife, drowned in tears, unable to speak,—his children making loud lamentations for their father,—forming a striking contrast to the silent but deep sorrow of the mother.

" Dame," said the priest, " you have been a good wife ; your husband is, no doubt, in a happier place : be careful of your children,—that is now your duty. See here this infant, by a strange accident, given in charge to me : it wants the breast ; be tender of it ; buy it some linen ; here is money for that purpose." He then opened the purse, and gave her some gold : the good woman took the child from him, and on opening the cloak, found it wrapt up in a fine dimity petticoat : she dressed it in the coarse, but clean clothes of her own children : and as it appeared very ill, prayed the

good

good father to christen it, if not yet done: he complied with her request; and as he had been desired, named her Violante.—I am that unfortunate.”

“ Be comforted, child,” said the Baroness: “ doubt not that innocence is the care of Heaven: remember you was protected in the most helpless state of your life: the same goodness will still be your guard as long as you shall put your whole trust and dependance on it; the divine proved a father sent you from Heaven; look on me as a mother.” The grateful Violante could only kiss the hands of her benefactress, and bedewed them with her tears: by the kind expressions of the Baroness, she soon recovered, and resumed her discourse.

“ He left me, after telling my nurse he would in a few days come again to see me, which he did. I seemed to thrive; my nurse had buried her husband; I appeared to her as a gift from Heaven, and she bestowed her utmost care to nourish me. The day arrived on which the gentleman had appointed to meet Father Felix: he got up early, that he might first see how I did, and hastened to the place, an hour before the appointed time: here he waited some hours, but saw no one that had the least appearance of being the person he expected, and was obliged to return

return home, much chagrined. For several days, he went to the same spot; but was never able to see him: he made all the enquiry in his power, but could trace nothing. One person indeed said he had seen a gentleman in a chaise leave town a few days since, that answered his description, but knew not the route he had taken: on examining the purse that had been given with me, he found the contents were fifty double pistoles, which he trusted would keep me till he heard again of the gentleman. He used often to sceme, and mentioned the circumstances attending me to his acquaintances? some laughed at the presents; others said they pitied, then thought no more of me. One lady, whose husband was a merchant of eminence, told him, she would take a ride to see his fondling, if he would accompany her.

“ He gladly embraced the offer, hoping at a future period it might prove of benefit to me: as the Lady was fond of children, and never had one to live.

“ I was then near five years old, tall of my age, and prattled with great fluency: my nurse saw the Lady first; I was at play in a vineyard at the back of the cottage: she told her she was come to see if Father Felix’s description of me was
true

true. " Oh! dear Madam," said the good woman, " she is the sweetest child I ever beheld; and I am sure is born of noble parents. I will fetch her." She called me—I flew to her as fast as I was able: indeed I was as fond of her as if she had been my own mother. I observed she cried and kissed me. " Why do you cry?" said I,—“ I will be very good.” The fond creature clasped me in her arms, and carried me into the cottage, telling me to make courtesy to the lady, which I did in my best manner.

“ You will, noble lady, excuse me for repeating what was said, and not impute that to foolish vanity, which is necessary to my story.”—“ The little angel! how bright are her eyes! how white her teeth! how fine her shape and complexion!” exclaimed the lady: she gave me a thousand kisses, and made my nurse a handsome present: for my part, I appeared as much charmed with the lady, and cried at being taken from her: she said she should pay me another visit, and did nothing but talk of me as she went home. Father Felix joined in the praises, and expressed his apprehensions of what would become of me, as he was fearful he might soon be obliged to remove to another benefice, and the money would last but a short

time, he having paid, with great liberality, being daily in hopes he should have enquiries made after me. A soon as the lady saw her husband, she broke into exclamations in praise of the little beauty she had been to visit, saying, how happy she should be to have such a child to amuse her!

Mr. Le Merchant, her husband, smiled at her description, and said, she had better adopt me, as she was so much delighted with me. "Well," she replied, "I will fetch her to dine with you, however; and if you then approve of it, will desire Father Felix to let me take care of her education. He agreed to her proposal; and she sent for the Father, who was delighted at the offer, and commended her tender disposition towards me, saying, he should pray that I might be a blessing to her. Accordingly, on the Thursday following, she came for me, telling my nurse what were her intentions, and assuring her, that she would not forget her: and that she might come and see me as often as she pleased. The good woman wept at parting with me; but said, though she should lose her cherub, she was glad it was so much to my advantage. My clothes took but a short time to collect, and she sent with them the petticoat I was wrapped in when she first had me, which, she observed, might contribute

bute to discover my parents. After embracing me, I was carried to the carriage, and in it driven from the door of that cottage which had been my asylum.

“ On arriving at Milan, I was delighted with the noise and bustle that prevailed. I wanted every toy that a shop we stopped at afforded; and arrived at Mr. Le Merchant’s loaded with a profusion of dolls, &c. &c.

“ I was carried into a large room, ornamented with pictures, by the best masters, which I gazed at with childish astonishment, and asked my mama, for so she said I must call her, why those fine ladies and gentlemen did not put on their clothes. She laughed at me, and made me observe that they were painted on canvas. Whilst she was thus employed. Mr. Le Merchant entered: I went and kissed his hands. “ Sweet child,” said he, and took me on his knee: “ will you live with us?” “ Yes, if you will let me.” He bestowed more commendation on me than even his lady; and said as fortune had accidentally brought me under his protection, he would never desert me.

“ I now had every attention bestowed on my education, and improved as fast as could be wished, in the accomplishments

usual

usual for young ladies of rank. My nurse at first came often to visit me, and I was always delighted to see her.—In less than two years she removed to a distance from Milan, and I have heard nothing of her from that time. This was a period of my life which will be ever remembered with regret. My whole delight was in improvement, as I perceived it gave pleasure to my dear benefactors, whom I loved with a filial duty; and they often said, I was the dearest of children, and wished their nephew had my disposition.

“Years rolled on in this happy manner, till I attained sixteen; then a different scene began to open.”—The servants now came to announce that dinner was on the table: the Baroness said, rising, “You shall go on with your story to-morrow; but my patient must let me insist on her fatiguing herself no further at present.” They ate their dinner in rather a grave disposition, which was dispelled soon after, by the ease and liveliness of the Baroness; who, when she conferred favours, did it in such a manner, as to take off all restraint from the person favoured. Indeed, in the present instance, she felt herself so much interested for the fair Violante, that had it not been for the hopes of being of more service
to

her, when she heard the history, she would not have let her go on with it. Curiosity, she used to say, should never be indulged, unless it was to the benefit of the object enquired about. Indeed, calumny seemed to lose its venom in her presence; as she had a fund of humour and good sense, joined to great knowledge of the world, that prevented the circle of friends she used to associate with, from feeling that vacuum in conversation, that is generally seized on byslander, as an immediate resource: she was innocent herself, and wished not to hear the failings of others.

In the evening they went to the theatre, where an active harlequin made them laugh, in defiance of probability. On their retiring to rest, they fell into the slumbers of the virtuous, and arose with increasing health.

When breakfast was over the Baroness proposed to Violante to continue her narrative, which she did, a charming blush taking possession of her, as she proceeded in these words:

“ I believe I mentioned my arriving at the entrance of my seventeenth year.” —
 “ You did,” said the Baroness. “ One day Mr. Le Merchant came into the room, where his lady and myself were at work

and told her, that a young gentleman, whom the duke of Modena had recommended in the strongest terms, had intreated to learn the business of a merchant in his counting-house; adding, he was born near Naples, and had not been educated for that life, as the church was what he had been designed for.—Madame Le Merchant replied, she could have no objection, if it was agreeable to himself. He told her, as the young man was an entire stranger in Milan, he should sleep for a few nights in their house. This was likewise assented to, as she made it a rule to be pleased with what he approved. He then said, he would bring him home that evening. In the afternoon I went to confession, which my good Father Felix strongly recommended: indeed his parental advice and anxiety for my future welfare, had never been remitted.

“ On my return home, I found Mr. and Mrs. Le Merchant with the young stranger, in the drawing-room: he arose at my entrance, and made a low bow Mademoiselle, said Mr. Le Merchant, let me introduce you to Mr. Mazirire.

“ Mr. Mazirire, you will, I am certain, be happy in the acquaintance of my dear Violante.” “ Sir,” replied the youth, “ the favors you confer on me, render me unable to return proper thanks:—to the ladies

ladies I trust for forgiveness, by the graciousness of their looks." On further conversation, he informed us, he had been two years in England, and spoke the language with great ease and correctness.

"Violante," said Mr. Le Merchant, "you have said you should like to learn English; perhaps my young friend will give you some instructions." "Most willingly," replied Mr. Mazirire, "and shall think it a high honor." He appeared about twenty years of age, tall and elegantly formed: his complexion rather brown, eyes a dark blue, his teeth white; he had a pleasing smile, as well as an air of quality, which seemed to command the respect and friendship of all that spoke to him." "Pray, my dear," said Lady B. laughing, "had you not better have said *love* than friendship?"

Violante blushed—and went on: "He was indeed a fine young gentleman. The next day, he began to instruct me. I had so able a tutor, that I soon made considerable progress, and in a short time could converse in English: he used to employ the hours he was not engaged in the counting-house, in teaching me. My benefactors were delighted on finding the rapid progress I made, and applauded us for our attention. Far from its being
irksome

irksome, we seemed always to begin with pleasure, and leave off with reluctance: he enlarged my ideas, at the same time he taught me a new language; and our delight was mutual. Mr. and Mrs. Le Merchant grew so fond of him, that they would not permit his going into lodgings; and he seemed to treat them with the utmost gratitude, relieving Mr. Le Merchant of as much trouble as possible; and in a short time doing most of the business.

“ We often had little concerts at our house; and, as great pains had been taken with me, I was flattered with having a fine voice and some judgment.” “ Take care,” said the Baroness, “ you are not bringing yourself into trouble. I am passionately fond of a fine voice.” — “ I shall be always ready to obey you in the best manner I am able,” said Violante, bowing.

“ Mr. Mazirire played on the German flute, and used to accompany my singing. One day, when we were to have a concert, he played over in the morning, songs he was to play in the evening; and, happening not to be quite perfect in one of them, I laughed, and told him, if he did not perform better, I would sing so well, that he should not be able to play at all.

“ Violante,” said he, with eagerness, “ you
C have

have too much advantage over me already: in pity, try not to be more destructive."

"Who,—I, Sir,—aim at your destruction! You are strangely mistaken,—be assured I have never thought of you but with esteem,"

"Sweet angel!" he replied, "divine creature!—Who, *I*?" "Come, let us try again," interrupting him, with a hesitation too visible. We again tried the song, with worse success than at first, as I was more out of time than himself. I said, his bad play prevented me from being able to accompany him then, but made no doubt of doing it when he had practised a little more. I then left the room, and went to dress. Madame Le Merchant was pleased with my person, and was very particular that my clothes set well, and were becoming. That day she made me take more than ordinary pains; and when I had finished,—exclaimed, "*My sweet girl!* may heaven avert those charms from proving a fatal blessing!"

"Dear Madam," I replied, "the gratitude and duty I owe to you, will, I hope, ever prevent me from doing any thing to give you unhappiness; and I trust, you have taken too much pains with my understanding to let a foolish
vanity

vanity prove destructive to my peace."

"The company now began to assemble: we went into the saloon, to receive them: my voice had been more extolled than it deserved, and drew a larger party than usual; among others, a lady begged to introduce to Madame Le Merchant two gentlemen of her acquaintance, who were on their return to England: their names, she informed her, were Lord Raymond, and the Honourable Mr. Sandford, his cousin.

"Lord Raymond intreated she would pardon his intrusion, and observed that he had heard so much of the young lady's voice who resided with her, that he had deferred his journey, in hopes of being gratified in the most exquisite manner.

"Madame Le Merchant made a courtesy: "My Lord, I fear report has said so much, that Mademoiselle Violante will fall very short of what you have been led to expect: if her voice was indeed answerable to her understanding and sweetness of temper, it would be inimitable." He made a compliment, and begged she would be so kind as to inform him, which of the young ladies was Mademoiselle Violante.

I was talking to some of my acquaintance at a distant part of the room, when Madame Le Merchant came to me, followed by his Lordship: "My dear," said she, "this is Lord Raymond: he has favoured us with his company, on purpose to hear if your voice answers the character he has heard of it."—"If the Lady's voice is as charming as her person," said his Lordship, "it is matchless."

"Mr. Mazirire, who was standing near me, seemed hurt at the warmth of his expression, and told me the concert waited, which prevented me from making any other reply than a low courtesy. When it was over, his Lordship came to me, and said, "I am now certain, that music is truly the delight of angels; for I have felt the transports of the blessed, whilst I heard the melody of your enchanting voice."—"My Lord, if I have afforded you any entertainment, I beg you will not distress me by mentioning it: your politeness makes me fear I have exposed myself to your ridicule, rather than meet your approbation." I went to Madame Le Merchant.—"Well Violante," said the dear lady, "you have sung."

fung charmingly : never did I hear you perform so well ; and Mr. Mazirire played with infinite taste.”—“ Yes, Madam,—he was of great advantage to my voice.”

“ Pray,” said my Lord, “ is the gentleman a relation of yours ? ” “ No, my Lord, he is in the counting-house, and is a great favourite with my husband, as well as myself.” “ Of what country, may I presume to ask ? ”—“ Of Naples : he has been a great traveller.”

The servant announced the arrival of his Lordship’s carriage : he wished us a good night, saying, he should call again to enquire after her health. When he was gone, Madame Le Merchant rallied me on having made a conquest, which diverted us both till bed-time.

“ The next morning, we had hardly finished our breakfast, when a rap at the door proclaimed company, which proved to be Lord Raymond and his cousin : he said he was so apprehensive that I had exerted myself last night to the prejudice of my health, that he could not overcome his impatience—“ Yes,” said his cousin, “ your impatience had like to have occasioned a shocking accident.” We enquired what had happened. Nothing,”

thing," said his Lordship, "but my stupid fellow driving over a mule." "Yes," rejoiced Mr. Sandiford, "so he did; but you have forgot to mention there was a man on it." "Pho, pho," said my Lord, "they were not much hurt; a little money made them well again."

"Madame Le Merchant exclaimed at the obstinacy of coachmen, who, she said, often took pleasure in doing injuries to foot-passengers; adding, she always prevented hers from driving fast in the streets.—"But my cousin," said Mr. Sandiford, laughing, "was cursing his not going faster, though the horses almost galloped."

"I was so anxious to see you, ladies, I should have thought the swiftness of a balloon too slow for my wishes." "Did your Lordship ever ascend in one?" "No, charming Violante,—but I have seen many: should you like to behold one?" "Certainly," I replied, "but not entrusted with the conveyance of a human being, as the dread I should feel at the risque of the person, would prevent me from receiving any gratification." "If you will do me the honour," said his Lordship, "I am happy enough to have one, which I had made to amuse myself, but

but have not yet used it : it shall be ready by to-morrow, if the weather continues fine, at whatever hour you shall appoint."

"About noon," said Madame Le Merchant, "Violante and myself will wait on you." Ladies, you make me delighted : I will instantly set about making the necessary preparations." He took his leave.

"At dinner she informed her husband what an entertainment we were going to ; and said, she hoped he would accompany us. He replied, if it was possible, he would be of the party, though he was rather apprehensive he could not, as business of great moment would require his attendance at a distant part ; he would however, send to enquire if his presence could be dispensed with, which, on his servant's return, he found was impossible. "Well," said Madame Le Merchant, "then Mr. Mazirire, will you be our chaperon?" Certainly, if you will do me that honour."

"The sun next morning rose bright as could be desired, and we prepared for our visit.

"Mr. Le Merchant, a short time before we were ready, told his lady he was not quite well ; he had a swimming in his head, which rather alarmed him.

"She

“ She intreated him not to go out, but send for a physician. He assured her, he was much better, thought the air would effect a perfect cure, and hoped she would be highly entertained by the amusement we were going to. He saluted, and wished us a good morning; adding, he should expect a particular account when we met at dinner.”

Here she blushed into an agony of grief. —The Paroness soothed her sorrows; and, after some time, she grew more composed. “ My dear,” said the good lady, “ you shall proceed no further this morning: to-morrow you will have summoned up resolution to go through the painful story: we will now retire to dress, and in the evening go to vespers: perhaps you may meet Father Louis: his discourse will fortify and restore your peace of mind.”

“ Dear Lady,” said Violante, “ he told me, the last time I saw him, he was to embark the next morning for Algiers, to redeem some captives, in conformity to the vow of a gentleman, who had chosen him to execute it, and that he should not be able to return for some months.” “ We will go, however,” said Lady Beaumont, “ some accident may have detained him; and I am sure
you

you would be unhappy not to have such a chance of seeing him, particularly as I shall leave Montpellier for Naples in a few days, and shall hope for Violante to accompany me." She returned grateful acknowledgment for the favour: her tears fell on Lady Beaumont's neck.

After dinner, they went to church, but could hear no tidings of the good priest; therefore concluded he was gone.— "Will it be agreeable to take a ride?" said the Baroness.— "Perfectly so," answered Violante. Accordingly they took a pretty long one. It was now that season of the year, when the happy peasants were employed in gathering the vintage: all ages were busy: the children that could not carry burthens, were eating the delicious fruit, whilst their parents, with grateful hearts, were carrying loads to the vine-presses:—they partook of their pleasure, and returned delighted with their excursion.

The Baroness, rather fatigued, after a light repast, proposed retiring, which Violante said she should be glad to do.

The next morning she asked her if she thought she had spirits to proceed in her story. "I will endeavour, Lady, (though it must give me a shock to relate) to continue

tinue my narrative as well as I am able.

“ We set off soon after, attended by Mr. Mazirire, who appeared rather dejected. On being asked the reason, he said it was our fancy. I talked of what we were going to see, and observed that if the balloon was answerable to the wish of his Lordship, it would be delightful.—“ Who,” said he, “ but would wish to contribute to your pleasure? My life I should think well lost, to gain you any happiness!” Our eyes happened to meet as he spoke. His gave me a look that seemed to penetrate my very soul. “ Upon my word,” said Madame Le Merchant, “ you carry your gallantry a prodigious way.”—“ I would,” said, he, “ on my honour.”

“ The coach stopped; Lord Raymond handed us out, and led Madame Le Merchant, followed by Mr. Mazirire, who led me into the drawing room: there was a large company, whom he had invited to see the balloon: he placed Madame Le Merchant in a seat at the upper end of the room, and insisted on my sitting by her, telling the company, that it was our desire to see a balloon, that made him recollect he had a small one by him.

“ The

“ The servant told his master all was ready, who led us into another room, where a cold collation was on the table: he had spared no expence in procuring ever dainty Milan could afford; and entreated us to consider the short time he had known of our visit as an excuse for his not having provided better entertainment. After the company had finished, he desired we would walk into the garden, as the balloon was quite filled. We all hastened to get a view: it was placed on a stage, where it was seen to advantage by every person. I gazed with admiration on the globe: it was gilt, and in the sun shone like a ball of fire, and was wavering in the wind, being prevented from rising, by a ribband which was fastened to the stage. After we had taken a proper view, he desired me to cut the string, which I did, and saw it instantly ascend.

“ I felt an awful sensation at the sublime spectacle before me.—What!—has man made a discovery that has enabled him to ride on the wings of the wind?—Astonishing! Yet is not the round earth itself a bubble? and does not the rarefied air in its vast caverns, heated by internal volcanoes, cause it to balance in the immense vault that surrounds,

rounds it? My ideas were most likely erroneous; but at the instant they rushed on me. You will forgive me for mentioning them."

"Certainly," said Lady Beaumont, "I like to hear the observations of young people: they have a fire in their description that gives such lustre to their subjects, as will ever please; and the hand of criticism should point out their errors in the gentlest manner."

Violante desired her Ladyship would be so kind as to prevent her from abandoning the train of reason to the guidance of fancy, and pursued her discourse.

"It was soon hurried from our sight; and, as the wind set, I make no doubt that it fell into the sea; for it was never found, though his Lordship offered a reward for it: when it was obscured by clouds, and no hopes remained of seeing it again, the company began to depart, and we had notice that our carriage was ready."

"Madame Le Merchant said, she hoped she would see him at her house, before he left Milan. He made her a low bow, thanked her for her invitation, of which he assured her he would avail himself, as something had happened which would

would prevent his return to England so soon as he had intended.—We got into our carriage.

“ Mr. Mazirire said he would conduct me, as Madame Le Merchant would do Lord Raymond that honour. They gave each other a look of suspicion at parting. —“ What,” said Madame Le Merchant, as we went home, “ I wonder, prevents his Lordship from returning! I thought he had settled every thing for his departure.” “ Yes,” said Mr. Mazirire, “ he had, and his chaises and horses were ready. I think his reason for staying is pretty obvious.” “ What is it you allude to?” said I.—“ Yourself, —Violante !” —“ Who,—I the cause?” You are disposed to rally.” “ I am serious, I assure you,” said Mr. Mazirire.

“ Well,” said my benefactress, “ if that should be the case, you have made, my dear, a valuable conquest, though I believe it is a mistake.”

“ We now were so near our house, as to perceive there was a crowd about it, which prevented our driving up. Mr. Mazirire jumped out, said he would return immediately, and desired us not to be alarmed. Tears accompanied Violante as she proceeded. He staid some minutes before he returned; but when he did, he appeared

peared by his countenance greatly agitated. —“Ladies, give me leave to attend you.” “ I am terrified,” said Madame Le Merchant; “ what is the matter?” “ I will lead you in, Madame: Dr. Corfellis is in the house.” “ Oh ! my husband,” said the good lady, “ let me fly to him.” I was unable to speak, but followed. Mr. Mazirire was obliged to support her trembling limbs. Never—never shall I forget the shocking scene that presented itself to me, when the parlour door was opened! On a couch opposite to our entrance, lay Mr. Le Merchant, with a countenance on which death was depicted: a surgeon in vain endeavouring to draw blood from his arm. The doctor held his other hand, feeling his pulse, which sensibly grew every minute fainter—it fluttered—hesitated—stopped—went faster—appeared rather more distinct;—“ He yet lives,” were the words that we heard as we entered.

“ Madame Le Merchant gave a shriek, and fell to all appearance lifeless on the floor: the sudden shock roused her husband from the calm insensibility in which he lay: he started—opened his eyes—looked at his wife—myself—and Mr. Mazirire, who was assisting to lift up his lady.—He attempted to speak,—voice was denied

denied him : he lifted up his hands, gave a deep groan, and expired. [The Baroneſs wept for ſome minutes.] I was inſenſible to every thing, and on my recovering, found I was on my bed, my maid by me. I ſaid I muſt attend Madame Le Merchant, and was riſing, when Mr. Mazirire entered the room, and fell on his knees by the bedſide. “For pity’s ſake do not make me quite diſtracted : let me beſeech you not to get up till you have more ſtrength.” “How does my dear friend?” interrupting him, “ſhe wants me—I muſt go.” “Be calm,” ſaid he, “for a few hours. The doctors have given her a compoſing draught, and ordered her to be kept as ſtill as poſſible : when ſhe awakes I will inform you. I am ſure you will not attempt what muſt injure her.” I found myſelf ſo weak, that I could only anſwer with tears, and threw myſelf on the pillow, in an agony of ſorrow.

“He retired in much affliction : in three hours he came, and told me ſhe had fallen into a ſlumber, which it was thought would prove critical, and it was wiſhed might laſt ſome time. He beſought me to take ſome reſreſhment, which would enable me to be of more ſervice : that conſideration prevailed, and

I took

I took some biscuit and a glass of wine, which revived me.

"I desired he would inform me the particulars of Mr. Le Merchant. "Dear Mademoiselle," said Mr. Mazirire, "why will you make me further distress you?" "It will not Sir," said I.

"He then acquainted me, that Mr. Le Merchant had been to the place he told us of, and transacted his business: he complained that his head ached: they desired he would have a coach home, offering to attend him; but he refused, saying, he should be better for the walk.

"A gentleman who was in company, said he should pass his door, and would walk with him: he consented: they soon after set out: he walked pretty well at first; but as he came near home, the gentleman found he staggered; and, looking in his face, was surprised at the visible alteration: he enquired how he did, but he could not answer, and in a minute sunk on the pavement.

"Dr. Corfellis was passing in his chariot; and, hearing a gentleman had fallen down in a fit, alighted; he found it was an apoplectic one, and that he could not, in his opinion, recover: finding he was so near home, he recommended his being taken there. Accordingly, he was

carried

carried in just before you arrived: you know the rest."

"What is become of his lady?"
 "She was carried to her chamber, before she shewed any sign of life; you likewise fainted, and was in the same manner taken to your's."

"The doctors said, youth would soon restore you; but were fearful Madame Le Merchant's fit would be followed by a fever: they bled her; and as I before told you, ordered her to be kept quite still: after about an hour, she spoke, though with great incoherence, and was prevailed on to swallow a draught, that threw her into a sleep, from which she is not yet awakened."

"The doctors are now with her, and will, I dare say, give a favourable account of her amendment."

"Amen!" said I: "may Heaven restore her:---where shall I go? what will become of the orphan! Tears choaked my words." "Dear Lady," said he, "be comforted; you will, I hope, find she is much better: I will go and enquire." He went, and staid but a short time. He said, "she will, I trust, mend by to-morrow; at present she has a good deal of fever." I arose,--- he offered his arm to support me to her room. As we were going

going, he entreated me to summon all my fortitude, as well to comfort my friend, as to prevent my relapsing. I assured him, I would endeavour to follow his advice, as I felt myself greatly obliged by his attention. He made a bow.

“ I opened the door of my dear friend’s room, and walked softly in : she heard—and asked who it was.—I went to the bedside : she held out one of her hands ; I pressed it in mine ; it burnt :—I bedewed it with my tears.—“ How does my *Violante* ? I feared I should see you no more : how pale you look ! ”—I intreated the dear lady not to fatigue herself : I was now quite well, and was come to attend her. “ Sweet tender blossom ? that must not be yet : I shall have time to talk to-morrow : retire for to-night : I am disposed to slumber : your presence will prevent me : should I be worse, I will send for you.” She then desired me to retire to rest. I had ever complied with her wishes, and would not now dispute them, fearing it might make her uneasy. I should have felt much easier, if she would have let me sit up : she shook her head, saying, “ No, no, my dear.” I kissed her hand, went to my room, as I could be of no use, and soon after went to bed : nature was wearied, and I fell into a deep sleep, which

which held me till seven next morning. Hastening to my benefactress, I found she was in a slumber, but started often; the attendants said she had slept a good deal in the night, though they feared in an uneasy manner, as she caught often so as to give great alarm. I watched her for some time before she awoke, which she did in a hurry, looking rather wild.

"How long have you been here, Violante?" "A short time, Madame." "What is it o'clock, my dear?" "Almost eight. How do you find yourself?" "I shall be better soon," said the dear woman, with an expressive look, that struck me to the heart, though I affected not to understand her meaning. I carried her a medicine, and desired her to take it. "Will it make you easier?" said she, with a sweet smile. "Certainly, my dear Madame; I hope it will make you better."—"Then give it me." She swallowed it with difficulty, but her stomach was too weak to retain it. "Now, my dear, you will not again press me to what can be of no real service." I could only answer by my tears.

"Why, my child, do you grieve?" "Oh, dear Madame, I was in hopes the sleep you have had would have been of great service; and I am sorry the medicine did not agree with you. The doctors

tors are coming, and will order one that will." She shook her head,—saying softly to herself, "*that is impossible.*" She held my hand, looking earnestly in my face, with the tenderest compassion. I asked her if she wanted any thing. "Yes, my love, I want to talk to you, but will not till the doctors are gone." They soon after arrived, and having heard all the symptoms of their patient, retired to consult on the case. She told them before they left the room, that she should insist on hearing their opinions, as she had many things yet to do. They assured her they would comply with her request.

"They returned, and she again desired they would inform her, not, she said, that she could not recover, that she knew, but how long they thought she should live. "Madame," said one of the doctors, "you are doubtless, extremely ill, yet we have known recoveries from as desperate cases: could you but take sufficient nourishment, we should have hopes."

"They shook their heads.—Come, come, gentlemen, do not treat me as a child, nor suffer me to trifle away the short time that I have to live; besides, you would defer my happiness. Say—when shall I be released, do you think?"

"By this time to-morrow, if you have

no favourable change, heaven may possess another angel."

" Oh ! you delight me ! you will call in the evening ; I will take my leave ; let my confessor and Father Felix be sent for."

" Whilst this was passing, I, almost lost to feeling, became like a statue. I wept not, nor did I attempt to speak ; my hearing and sight were the only senses I could make use of. I sat gazing on my more than mother, in a stupid despair, and though she spoke to me, was for some time unable to answer. I continued in this state till a message was brought that Father Clement was gone to Rome, to see a brother, who was in a confinement ; and that Father Felix would come directly ; which he did, almost as soon as the messenger. She desired he would be so kind as to confess her, and administer the comforts of the blessed sacrament, as her time would admit of no delay. He was shocked at finding what had happened since yesterday ; for he had not heard of the death of Mr. Le Merchant till he was sent for ; however, he soon appeared the christian hero ; and, as it was necessary, we left the room. After confession, he administered to her the sacrament, and exhorted her to keep herself in the
blessed

blessed state of mind she was then in, bidding us to take warning, not to put our dependance on either riches or health since a moment might deprive us of both. The attendants wept. I was silent. He observed the despair that was painted on my countenance; and, taking me aside, endeavoured to console me, by the most persuasive eloquence. "What, Violante! have my precepts no power over you? then, indeed, I have employed hours in vain: I flattered myself you had profited by my advice; but you not only pay no regard to them, but would oppose the orders of your Creator: rash girl! for what dost thou repine; at the mercy of an all-wise Providence, who thinks proper to reward the good life and charitable actions of two of its servants? You ought rather to think how melancholy the few years of your benefactress's life would pass, was she to linger on: she is now hastening to endless joy. Do not, I charge you, by the hopes you have of joining her in the same blessed place, disturb the tranquillity she enjoys, by letting her see you give way to despair." By such discourses as these, he roused me from the state I had been in. I acknowledged the truth of his doctrine, and begged his forgiveness for my disobedient behaviour.

"I grant

" I grant it, if you let it return no more. I shall come in the evening;—let me see resignation in every look and action." He spoke in a low tone to Madame Le Merchant; and, as he came from her bed-side, was heard to say, softly, " Blessed woman! may my death be like thine!" He gave me a look, and departed.

" As soon as I was able to compose myself, I drew near: she observed me with attention.—" Why this, my dear, is well. I can now talk to you." I bowed on her hand, whilst she proceeded. " I have been greatly disappointed in finding you was not capable of hearkening to me, as I was fearful you would lose the only opportunity I should have. Thank the Almighty that is not the case! observe my last instructions: from your birth you had neither parents nor relations to take care of you; you was given to a good priest, and left without one enquiry: your innocence was protected by Heaven: it touched Father Felix with a ray of mercy, which was communicated to me, by the kindness of my dear husband: you have, from that time, been treated with every care and attention we could bestow; and, with truth I declare, you have fully merited what we have done.

" Mr.

“ Mr. Le Merchant and myself have loved you, as if heaven had given us a child ; and the only anxiety I now feel, is leaving you at such an early period of your life ; though I have great comfort in thinking you will have the advice and spiritual guidance of Father Felix, who is tenderly interested in your welfare.

“ I was in hopes to have seen you settled in marriage ; but my Redeemer calls me to him : be in readiness to follow : suddenly may the hand of death seize you : trust not to late preparation for the awful change : be constant in your religious duties, and you will be assisted with grace to prevent you from falling : you will have need of it : as this world will offer many stumbling-blocks, you must be ever vigilant : your person, pleasing as it is, has been your least charm with us : your temper won our hearts ; your understanding gave us delight ; we looked on your form as a fair casket that contained most valuable jewels, which we had the satisfaction to polish and give lustre to ; and proposed guarding from every danger : let not our intent be lost, though we are taken from you. I have no doubt that you are amply provided for : be careful how you suffer your affections to be engaged ; consult Father Felix on any proposal

proposal that you think serious : he will make proper enquiries for you, such as a woman is unable to do : marry not, I charge you, for riches or rank : both are fallacious ; yet be prudent in your choice, or you will be miserable : grieve not for me, but think what a glorious transition I am about to experience !” She lifted up her hands and prayed inwardly : rapture seemed to beam in her eyes, as the sun darts for a moment through a dark cloud : she had no doubts,—no black accounts to settle.

“ I looked on her as an angel, and was attentive. When she had prayed she told me, she thought she could have one more slumber, and when she awaked, would speak to Mr. Mazirire : desired me to lay another pillow for her head, as she breathed with difficulty : then gave me a tender embrace : “ Let me not be disturbed, my dearest Violante.” I drew the curtain, and sat down close to the bed : she appeared to sleep tolerably easy for some time : I began to flatter myself with hopes of her amendment : in about an hour she called to me, her speech visibly altered. “ Violante, don’t leave me.” “ Dear Madame, I will not move.” “ Where is Mr. Mazirire ?” He came.

“ She gave him her hand. “ I wanted

to see you, Sir; you are a good young man: I have a sincere regard for you: favour me by accepting a trifle: it will recall us sometimes to your memory." He wept, but spoke not: she had a repeating watch and diamond ring, which Mr. Le Merchant wore, brought to her: "keep these for my husband's sake. Observe," to her attendants, "I give them to this gentleman. Farewel, Sir: may the protection of the Almighty be ever with you?" He, on his knees kissed her hand, and retired.

"She then spoke to her women, gave them all a remembrance, and of each took an affectionate farewell.

"Now, my dear Violante, take my last blessing: I am going very fast." She held my hands in hers, and gave me a solemn benediction, which she concluded in these words: "I have given you nothing; for you will soon have abundance."

"Father Felix having sent up word he was in the parlour, she desired him to come to her: her speech now failed her, so as to be scarcely intelligible: he found she had but a few minutes to exist, and administered the last duty. Giving a deep sigh, she said, "Father, I am ready:" then, after a short struggle, resigned

resigned her breath—Thus died one of the best of women.

“ I had my eyes fixed on her, as she breathed her last, and held her lifeless hands fast locked in mine. Father Felix was some time ere he spoke: he then said, “Violante, remember the last commands of this blessed angel: you cannot restore her: act as she would have done: retire to your chamber: reflection will be of service: I will call on you in the evening. Farewel.”

“ I threw myself into a chair, in a state of confused horror not to be described: tears came to my relief: I fell on my knees, and besought the comfort of the blessed spirit to restore my peace of mind. I acquired fortitude: I had been murmuring at what a wise Creator had ordained; and prayed for forgiveness. In two hours I gained a victory over my passions, nor have I since suffered them to enslave me. I felt a quiet sorrow, that sunk deep into my heart; but I suffered not any excess of it to appear.

“ Mr. Mazirire sent his respects, and entreated me to dine below. I complied with his request: he behaved with more reserve than usual, which I considered as a mark of his esteem.” The hour of dinner once more broke on her narrative. They passed the afternoon in paying charitable visits.

The next morning Violante went on with her history.

"We talked on the melancholy events that in a few hours had deprived us of our beloved friends and benefactors.

"You, Sir, know not half their virtues: I have felt their full force; a poor destitute orphan! they took pity on me, brought me up, and endeavoured to store my mind with precepts of religion, as well as to give me every advantage that education could bestow." "Yes, blessed spirits! I will try to fulfil your kind beneficent wishes. I will please myself with the idea, that you still behold me with affection."

"Oh! Mademoiselle," exclaimed Mr. Mazirire, "you are excellence itself, and merited the regard of those blessed beings you have been addressing!" I felt abashed at his compliments; told him I should be glad to speak to him next morning.

"I then gave some necessary orders relative to the interment, and spent the evening in my chamber.

"Father Felix sent me word he was unable to come that night, from a fall which had sprained his ankle. I began to consider what would be the proper conduct for me to pursue on this trying occasion.

occasion. I made no doubt of a sufficient income to live in a genteel manner. Madame Le Merchant had told me so.

“ I had never heard of any relations, but a nephew, a sister’s son, of whom Mr. Le Merchant used to express his abhorrence, for making a stalking-horse of religion, covering under that mask, the most sordid, avaricious disposition; looking black at every innocent indulgence, though he would have felt no compunction at having added to his store, by depriving an innocent family of their right, which he had attempted to do, but was prevented by the interference of his uncle, who had never spoken to him after, though the mean creature had often solicited a reconciliation. I was, therefore certain he had prevented him from receiving any benefit by his death.

“ I imagined that he had left largely to different charities, and pleased myself with being able to follow the examples I had so long enjoyed; concluding, they had appointed me guardians till I arrived at the age of twenty-one.

“ I went early to bed; arose greatly refreshed: the instant I was dressed, I hastened to the room that contained the bodies of my dear worthy friends: they were laid in rich coffins, and looked so sweetly tranquil,

quill, as made me almost fancy that they smiled on me, I kissed them,—their cold lips told me the truth of their decease. I shed tears over them, and vowed to follow their precepts.

“ Having vented the effusions of my soul, I was leaving the room, when, surprised by hearing a bustle on the stairs, I distinguished the voice of Mr. Mazirire, who said, with a warmth that alarmed me, “ You shall not go up : Mademoiselle Violante shall be acquainted that you are here.”

“ What !” said a gruff voice, “ you want to rob me ! I suppose you have suffered no loss of time, or you would have sent for me, but I have kept a good lookout, I can tell you.”——My heart beat, my knees trembled : I called to ask Mr. Mazirire what was the matter.

“ Mademoiselle,” answered he, “ here is a rude fellow, who says, he is a nephew to Mr. Le Merchant, and insists on coming up stairs, and sealing up the rooms ; but, without your permission, my sword shall first pass through his body : he is some impostor.”

“ No,” said two of the servants, “ we know him well : we were with our late master, when he appeared in a court of justice,

justice, in behalf of a family which his nephew wanted to deprive of a fortune."

"Here the gruff voice grew outrageous. To silence it, I said he might, if he insisted on it, walk up stairs.

"I may date my ruin from this unguarded permission: he flew up in an instant, rushed by me into the room I had left, and demanded the keys. I asked him for what purpose, as I should not attempt to displace a single article till the will was read, which had not yet been looked for. Here I made a worse mistake than before: he smiled with horrid satisfaction, as I have since recollected; and said, with a softened accent, I had done quite right: he would only seal up the cabinets, that contained the papers and jewels, which he would look over after burial. To this I assented; and gave him the keys: he went and sealed up several, just opening the drawers. Coming to a cabinet of Mr. Le Merchant's he said, he had not got the right key, and desired me to go back and look for it. I did, and could not find it: as I returned, I found him trusting something into his pocket, and the cabinet open.

"I thought you had not the key, Sir!"—"I have since found it, and you shall see me seal the cabinet up: I will then

then wish you a good morning, and wait on you the day after the funeral. My dear uncle and aunt, they would not have refused seeing me, but for the baseness of false friends. Dear souls!" said the complete hypocrite, "how placid they look." He pretended to shed tears. I turned from him in disgust: he then went away, and I was highly pleased at his departure.

"Soon after, I went down and sent for Mr. Mazirire: he appeared chagrined: I told him what had passed: he interrupted me.—

"Good God! what have you done? I fear the villain has destroyed you!" I shook as he spoke. "Forgive me, dear lady, for my warmth: it is my apprehension for you, that made me forget my respect.—Pray God, my fears may prove groundless." "Oh!" said I, "how weak, how wrong have I acted! I now think the vile wretch has taken away the will, as I observed he thrust something into his pocket: it rustled like paper: I could not forbear weeping. Mr. Mazirire endeavoured to comfort me, making use of every argument, assuring me, he would exert himself, in every thing to serve me, and that he should think it a high honour, if I would employ him. I could only thank him by a bow.

"A servant

“ A servant brought me a polite card from Lord Raymond : he lamented what I, possessed of such fine feelings, must suffer ; and hoped he should be permitted soon to pay his respects in person. I shewed the card to Mr. Mazirire :—he coloured,—Why, sure, there is more in it than I observed : let me read it again.—Give my compliments to his Lordship : in a few day I shall be glad to see him.—The servant took the message.

“ Mr. Mazirire, you look unwell ; something is the matter : let me ring for some water.”—“ No : I am quite well : my heart is at present torn with sorrow. I shall soon be composed again.”—“ Ah ! Sir, must I shew you how to bear afflictions ?”

“ Charming Violante ! mine are greater than yours.”

“ Now, Sir, I must smile at your assertion.” “ It is, however, true.” “ Explain yourself ? —I cannot comprehend what you mean.” “ I dread to explain myself—yet I must do it, or perish.

“ Yes, adorable woman ! I endure the misery of loving you—loving you to distraction—and find jealousy fixing its venom in my breast ! nay, hear me now—nor drive me raving from your presence ! I have long borne my misery con-

cealed, flattering myself that a time would arrive, when I might, without appearing too presumptuous, lay my heart at your feet: the dreadful circumstances that have happened, will not suffer me longer to remain in suspense. I plainly foresee a rival in Lord Raymond: tell me, then, for mercy's sake, may I hope?" He trembled, was greatly agitated, caught hold of my hand, which I had not power to withdraw, and bowed his head on it.

"As soon as I could speak, I told him he had astonished me: that I was unable to return a proper answer—the time he had chosen to mention such a subject, was so improper:—the idea he entertained of the common civilities of Lord Raymond so inconsistent with reason, that I was fearful his senses were indeed affected with the scenes in which he had been so melancholy an actor. I with difficulty drew my hand from his eager grasp. "Rise, Sir, or I shall instantly withdraw: I will hear no more:—if it will give you any satisfaction, I do assure you Lord Raymond will never give a moment's thought to Violante."—He was going to reply. I prevented him by preparing to leave the room. We found ourselves unable to converse with any degree of composure. After a short time,

time, I wished him a good morning, and retired.

“ Fresh ideas now crowded on my imagination: the declaration of Mr. Mazirre—his hint of Lord Raymond!—I considered what reason he could have for that supposition, but could find none:—then rushed on my recollection what would be the consequence of the visit of Mr. Le Merchant’s nephew, if he had been so wicked as to seize the will!

“ I remember that I had once heard Mr. Le Merchant tell his lady, in case of his death, to look in to that cabinet.

“ I shook with horror at what I must suffer, again to feel the sharp tooth of poverty, after being so long kept in the utmost ease and affluence? Tears gushed from my eyes: I recommended myself to the care of Heaven: I became calm and resigned to my destiny.

“ Father Felix called on me soon after. I told him all that had happened with Mr. Le Merchant’s nephew. He lifted up his eyes!—“ Unhappy girl! you are ruined! I should have come last night, to put you on your guard,” had not my fall prevented me. Poor Lady! She feared his wickedness, and desired me to prevent his getting into the house. She lamented the absence of Father Clement, as Mr. Le Merchant had consulted him about the disposal

disposal of several large sums in charitable donations. 'The poor will be defrauded, and you left desolate. Yet," added the pious man, " be not too much afflicted : put your dependance on your God: no villain can prevent you from receiving a glorious reward : fear not to encounter difficulties : they will soon be done away and if you have the blessing of patience, they will not appear burthensome."

" I told the holy Father, that I had made up my mind, whatever should befall me ; and that I would endeavour to shew his kindness had not been thrown away. On his departure, he said he should not be able to come for some days, as he was going into the country on particular business, for his superior : as soon as he came back, he would call on me. At parting, he gave me his benediction, recommending me to the guidance of the blessed Trinity. I could not forbear shedding tears ; and he was deeply affected.

" I passed the remainder of the day in preparations for mourning, which was as deep as if I had lost my parents. Mr. Mazirire was employed in settling the books so that we saw but little of each other, and then in the presence of servants.

" We went on in this manner for a week,

week, unmolested by the nephew, who only sent to know when his uncle was to be buried, as he would wait on me the next day. I accordingly sent him notice of the funeral. He sent for answer, "it was very well," but came not to the ceremony, at which I was highly pleased.

"They were buried, in as solemn and grand a manner, as became the largeness of their fortunes. Mr. Mazirire was the chief mourner, followed by the domestics of the deceased, who lamented over their beloved patrons. A proper sermon was preached on the occasion, which drew tears from many. The mourners returned home: I previous to their coffins being fastened up, took a sad farewell of their mortal remains; prayed for their souls, kissing their cold lips—turned from them,—took another look,—then with a melancholy heart and reluctant steps, bid them a final adieu; hurried to my chamber, and would not be seen that day.

"Next morning I was to have a visit from Mr. Le Merchant's nephew, which was to decide my fate. I desired Mr. Mazirire to be present during the time, which he promised. Notice was soon given of his arrival.—I trembled at his name;

name; and desired he might be shewn to me; I told the servant to inform Mr. Mazirire, I should be glad of his company. They came into the room together: he had a concealed joy in his horrid countenance. Permit me to describe his person:—he was about forty years of age; of a middling stature, rather inclining to stout; his complexion fallow as the juice of walnuts; his hair a rusty black, bushy, and half undressed; his eyes gray, deep set in his head, overhung with broad black eye-brows, which added to them a gloomy ferociousness; never to be forgotten; his nose was aquiline; his mouth wide; his teeth yellow; his long large chin seemed to promise in a few years to meet his nose; his shoulders were broad, and seemed to bend forward; his body which one must, had they not seen his huge clumsy legs, have thought would have sunk to the earth. Such was his outward appearance; but it was a brilliant of the purest lustre, to the heart it concealed! He made an attempt at bowing at his entrance; said he was punctual to his appointment, and would accompany me to look for the will: “no doubt,” said the hypocrite, “my uncle took care to have one by him, though his fortune would have as properly been mine without; and I have no doubt but that

that was his intention. "Oh!" said he, "so good a man could never mean to defraud an only nephew!"

"I made no other answer, than that Mr. Mazirire would be so obliging as to save me the trouble of attending him; and when they had finished their search, I should be ready to receive them.

"I went out of the room: in about two hours, they desired me to walk in. I saw by the looks of Mr. Mazirire what had been the success of looking for the will: the nephew, with a fawning affectation of humility, returned thanks to Providence, for the kindness his uncle had shewn him.

"I could not forbear saying, that I had great reason to think he was more indebted to his own management, than his uncle's intention, as I was certain he never meant that he whom whilst living he abhorred, should receive benefit from his death. He flew into a dreadful passion; called me the most shocking names, and swore he would that instant turn me out of his house.—I was too much terrified to reply.—Mr. Mazirire took him by the collar, and kicked him out of the room. He went away in a fury, swearing he would immediately come back, with his lawyer, and take us both

both up. I could hardly support myself, when Mr. Mazirire returned ; I perfectly gasped for breath ; he ran to me, and throwing himself on his knees, took hold of my hand : Do not let the villain give you any alarm : he shall not come near you again ; how my heart bleeds for you ! I will have justice done you."

"Oh ! Sir that is impossible ; sorry I am Father Felix is not returned, that he might direct me ; I will endeavour to do something to earn my bread ; a small matter will be sufficient." I could not forbear shedding tears ; he was in an agony. "Do not talk in such a style ;

surely I have application to be able to acquire what will make you happy, if you will lay me under such an obligation."

"Forbear, Sir, to mention such a subject, as I shall think you mean to affront me." He was going to reply, when a loud rap at the door made me start. I exclaimed, he is come ?" The door opened and Lord Raymond entered ; he made an apology for his early visit, saying he was so apprehensive what my gentle spirits had suffered, that he was unable to refrain from paying his respects."

"I told his Lordship, I was honoured by his attention ; assured him, that though I should ever lament the irreparable

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ble loss I had suffered, yet I had been from a child taught not to repine at the will of heaven; that I would endeavour to bear whatever trials might be my lot, with christian fortitude: He appeared charmed with my philosophy, as he called it. Just as he had finished a fine compliment, Mr. Le Merchant, followed by his lawyer and two officers, appeared. "Here, Mademoiselle," said he, stammering with passion, "I have brought those that will teach you what you ought to have done: your accomplice shall learn not to treat his betters with insolence, and kick the right owner out of his house."

"Scoundrel!" said Mr. Mazirire, ere "long you shall repent your villainy."

"Hear, gentlemen, what he says."

"What, may I ask, is the reason of this violent outrage," said Lord Raymond: "it must be of the most serious nature, to palliate such behaviour."

"Who are you?" said Le Merchant: "what, you are another bully, I suppose? but I am now a match for you."

"My Lord," said Mr. Mazirire, the "story is to be told in a few words." He then acquainted him with what had passed; concluding with expressing his sorrow that the cowardly nature of Le Merchant,

chant prevented him from acting as his honour dictated."

"Oh! the bloody monster! he will assassinate me!" roared out Le Merchant. "Seize him,—seize him." The lawyer bid his associates lay hold of him. Then turning to me, demanded what right I had to refuse quitting that house, as he understood it was the property of his client." I told him I had not the smallest intention of disputing his claim to the house, as I was well assured his client had taken care to remove all obstacles. "Be careful, pretty Mademoiselle, what you say, or we shall lay your delicate person in a place that will not be perfectly to your liking, though perhaps better than you deserve: walk out directly," said the brutish limb of the law, "or I shall thrust you out without more ceremony." I heard him not finish his unmanly harangue; life seemed to have totally left me; I fainted, to all appearance dead.

"Mr. Mazirire broke from the officers, flew at Le Merchant, seizing him by the throat; and, had he not been torne away, would, most likely, have prevented him from reaping any enjoyment from his baseness. He was hurried to prison, having scarce time to intreat his Lordship to be careful of me.

"If

“ It was so long ere I recovered, as to give them some apprehensions ; his Lordship swearing by every thing sacred, he would prosecute them for murder ; however, after a considerable space, I shewed signs of returning life, and soon after opened my eyes. My Lord was supporting me in his arms. I said, faintly, I was ready to go, desiring I might have a coach. His Lordship said, his was at the door, and he would order his servants to attend me wherever I pleased. I bowed—my maid offered to go with me. I said I would send in the evening, desiring her to pack up my clothes. I looked round: my lord observed me, and guessing my thoughts, said, Mr. Mazirire was gone on particular business, which would detain him some time.

“ Le Merchant and the lawyer grinned at each other, but said nothing. I offered to rise, but could not, without his Lordship’s assistance. I took not the least notice of any one but my maid, who I again informed, should hear from me that day ; nor did any offer to speak to me : the men servants seemed to pray for me, as they attended me to the coach : they could do no more ; his Lordship handed me in, then got in himself, which I thought he would not have done : my
weakness.

weakness prevented me from telling him of the impropriety; he asked me where I would choose to be taken. I replied, to Madame Villeroy's, who had been mantua-maker to Madame Le Merchant many years, and of whom she had a high opinion.—Whilst we were going there, he loaded me with a profusion of fine speeches, and repeated offers of service, lamenting in pathetic terms, the treatment I had met with; concluding, he should think himself the most favoured of mortals, if permitted to shew the sincerity of his friendship. I slightly thanked him for his offers; said I should know in a few days what it would be proper for me to do, as I should follow whatever Father Felix proposed to me, and was in daily hopes of his return.

“The coach now stopped at Madame Villeroy's; I asked if she was at home, and was informed she was; his Lordship would hand me out; he begged I would lean on his arm, as I went up stairs; this I refused, nor would I suffer him to go up with me. I thanked him for the trouble I had given, and wished him a good morning. He made a low bow, and got into his carriage.

“Madame Villeroy, who had been informed of my coming, was waiting for me

me at the head of the stairs, and desired me to walk into the drawing-room; she appeared surprised at my pale looks, and intreated to know what was the matter. I told her that Mr. Le Merchant had died without a will; that his nephew had taken possession of every thing; and, in short, turned me out of the house.

“ Good God ! what a dreadful story. Pray, young lady, what do you intend doing ? ” “ Indeed, Madame, I know not, till I see Father Felix : he will direct me. May I beg your permission for a few nights to sleep here ? ” She looked as if she would deny me. “ Why, indeed Mademoiselle, I should be very glad to oblige you, if it was in my power : my beds are all full : I have many workmen, who sleep in the house. ” I made fresh intreaties, and told her, if she had no bed, I would sit up for that night, as I really did not know where to go. She muttered about giving trouble, but said, as no one would take me in, I might stay there for that night, and I should sleep with her maid. I gave her many thanks, and assured her I would find some other lodging the next day. “ So you had best,” were her words, as she pulled the door after her.

"I was now alone; and, had I not been relieved by a flood of tears, should, I verily believe, have gone distracted. My head ran round; my brains appeared as if they were on fire: by degrees I regained my reason, and was ready to encounter fresh trials.

"I was suffered to remain a long time ere I saw a living creature. At last I heard her voice say "*Call her.*" The maid came, and desired me to walk down: dinner was on the table I felt no inclination to eat, but was apprehensive if I did not go, she would quarrel with me. I crept down as well as I was able. "So you are come:—I thought you would find your appetite." I assured her I never had less, but would not refuse her invitation. "Your servant, Madam: well, sit down—there is your place." I did as bid: the dinner was really a good one; and she desired I would partake of it, as I might not have such a one for a long time. I made her as little reply as possible, saying, I would be content with bread and water. "Aye, and very wholesome food, let me tell you," helping herself to the white of a pullet, and laying the leg on my plate:—"very good, indeed; give me a glass of wine. I dare say, you drink only the pure element, there is delightful water!"

water!—How squeamish my stomach is, give me a cordial.”

“ Thus she ran on whilst she was eating like a farmer, and drinking like a sailor.

“ When she had finished, she sent for her chief workwoman, and gave her some directions : after she was gone, said she would take a nap ; threw herself back in an elbow chair, and in a short time convinced me she enjoyed a sound sleep.

“ I now had time to reflect on the gross manner in which she had treated me, and discerned that loss of fortune was my only crime : I was sorry I had not applied to some of the ladies I used to be intimate with : yet, perhaps they might have behaved with equal coolness, though in a politer style. I was shocked at the idea, and determined not to go near them.

“ The servant came into the room : I took the opportunity to beg she would send a porter to Mr. Le Merchant's, to inform my maid where I was ; desiring she would bring all my clothes with her in a coach : I put a piece of silver in her hand, and desired she would pay the porter : she dropped a low courtesy ; said she would go for one directly. This made me easier. Madame Villeroÿ soon after began to stretch herself ; giving a loud yawn, opened her eyes, and complained of *sa tigue*,”

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The Baroness's gentleman told them dinner was ready. Lady Beaumont rose, and taking Violante by the hand, told her, she had been so affected by the narrative, as not to think of dressing. "If it would not be of injury to your health, I would beg the continuance of it after dinner; for, my dear child, I shall not be restored to my usual state of mind, till every cloud that obscures your happiness is removed. no matter or suit had won I"

Violante, unable to express her gratitude, fell on the neck of Lady Beaumont, who kissed her with a maternal tenderness, wiped the crystal drops from her bright eyes, and leaned on her arm, as they walked to the parlour.

Soon after dinner, the Baroness hinted her wish for Violante to continue her story, who immediately resumed it in these words;—

"I believe I left off at the awaking of Madame Villeroy?" "You did," said the Baroness. "She rang the bell, and ordered the servant to bring her some coffee, as she was obliged to go out on business; when it was brought, she helped herself; then asked me in a slight manner, to take a cup, if I chose to have any. I thanked her; and, as she had given me such a gracious leave, poured

out

out one, which was of great service, as it relieved me from an intense head-ach: she went out soon after, saying it was uncertain how long she might be gone.

“ To my great satisfaction I was once more left alone: it now occurred to me, that Mr. Mazirire would immediately come; and I was pleasing myself with the idea of his procuring me a lodging in some quiet family, where the expence would be trifling, and I should be at peace till Father Felix returned; as I had determined not to let any one know where I should remove. I had scarce made this conclusion, when my maid entered, with a bundle under her arm and a band-box in her hand: her eyes appeared as if she had been crying.—“ Well, Laura, have you brought my clothes?” “ Oh! my dear Lady, I have brought you all they would let me have, and been finely abused on your account: there was the lawyer on one side, and Le Merchant on the other, wanting me to accuse you of having robbed the house of jewels and plate; and that Mr. Mazirire had assisted you. I told them, they had best take care what they said, as I believed, if every one was as honest as you, or Mr. Mazirire either, other guess folks would

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have other peoples fortune ; that I cared not a farthing for their threats, not the snap of my thumb : I was going to pack up your clothes, and when I had done, they should give me my rightful wages, as I would not stay another hour."

" Well," said the lawyer, " you pert huffey, if you dare to take any thing, without our permission, I will instantly send you to prison, you impudent baggage : you shall keep Mr. Mazirire. company, and be hanged at the same time."

" I interrupted her, to ask what she knew of Mr. Mazirire. " Why when he saw you faint, he attempted to choak that villain Le Merchant : I am sorry he was prevented : poor dear gentleman, how we all pitied him, and lamented for you ! However, they took him to prison ; God knows where ! He had scarce time to intreat Lord——, (what is his name ?) to take care of you, as they tore him out of the house." I was greatly affected at what she told me, whilst she talked on as fast as she could find utterance.

" I was struck all on a heap by their threats. Le Merchant said, he would stand by me whilst I packed up your clothes ; that indeed you ought to have none, as they were the property of his late

late uncle, and now belonged to him: they both went up into your room; and when I had opened your drawers, would only permit me to take out some of your linen, two of your worst gowns, a few of your morning caps, and some other trifles, which are in these parcels, the rest of your clothes they locked up; and Le Merchant put they keys into his pocket, swearing you should have no more. I once or twice offered to put in a word; but they snapped so, I was fain to be silent and dared hardly mutter. Please God, I will now go back, get my wages, and take care of my own things, or they will say, by to-morrow, they are not my property, and never darken the door again."

"I told her I thought myself highly obliged for what she had done to serve me; and wished I was in a situation to reward her; that I sincerely hoped she would meet with a better place than mine; that if ever I should have occasion for her service, I would take her in preference to any. She cried at parting, and promised to find out, if possible, where Mr. Mazi-rire was confined, and let me know the next morning.

"When she had left me, I fell into a reverie on what had befallen me: I

my parents must have been guilty of some black crime, that drew down the wrath of Heaven on their child; and that I had communicated it to Mr. Mazirire, on his interesting himself in my behalf!—Sure I had done nothing to merit such severe trials! I was almost lost in these thoughts, when I was roused by the return of Madame Villeroy, who, with a bounce entered the room, complaining of the length she had walked, as she had the misfortune to have the coach break down. I lamented the accident, and hoped she felt no ill consequence; recommending her to lose a little blood, if she felt herself bruised.

“Yes,—yes,—I am bruised for certain;—what of that? I’ll lose no blood,—not I. Why child I want blood: I am half in a dropsy already: do you want to kill me quite?”

“I assured her, my regard for her health was the reason I mentioned bleeding, as I did not know of her indisposition.—“Well say no more: I know what is proper.—Here Antonio, bring me some balsamic water.” He brought what I suppose was a strong cordial; she swallowed a glass full, which had a wonderful effect, making her good tempered the remainder of the evening. She even favoured me

me with a song, with which I appeared to be charmed: she laughed at my sorrowful countenance; said, I need not despair; that I was handsome enough to gain the heart of some rich man, if I had but wit enough to manage him. In short, she said so much as to give me strong suspicions I had chosen a bad woman to apply to, which she had art enough to conceal from her virtuous employers.

“ I was determined to remain no longer with her than that night, let the consequence be ever so distressing. When bed-time arrived, she said, “ You are to sleep in that room,” shewing me into a close dirty hole, hardly to be called a closet: “ you shall lie by yourself, as I am not recovered from my fall: the maid shall sleep with me.”

“ When she was gone, I fell on my knees, and prayed for the Divine protection; then threw myself on the bed; it was some time before I could lay down; and when I did, was full of apprehensions—I had conceived the utmost abhorrence of Madame Villeroy. I lamented Mr. Mazirire’s fate, who on my account, was in prison; then flattered myself I might have the satisfaction of seeing him in the morning.

“ Nature

“ Nature at length yielded to rest ; the instant I awoke, I got up, and hastened out of the closet where I had slept. Never did I feel a more delightful sensation, than breathing the fresh air in a small garden at the back of the house ! I was walking in it a considerable time, before Madame Villeroy was visible. At length I heard the music of her voice, asking the maid if I was risen. I went into the room, wishing her a good morning, and hoped she was quite well. “ Very poorly, child, I could get no rest ; why, surely, you have been rouging ! You look as handsome as an angel.” I made no reply to her fine compliment ; the breakfast was brought in, of which she ate a surprising quantity, complaining all the time of want of appetite. She had not finished, when there was a loud rap at the door ; she concluded it was a customer, ordered the servant to shew the ladies into the drawing-room ; she would be with them in an instant. It was some time before she returned.

“ She came, laughing ; “ Oh ! Mademoiselle, I have had such a comical customer, I am in raptures : you would have been as much pleased as myself. You want some clothes : have what you like, I have taken such a fancy to you, that I
will

will let you have them ; what a sweet rogue you are ! Yes, yes,—eyes, hair, teeth, complexion, shape ! Why you possess a fortune in your own person.

“ I was astonished: when she had talked herself out of breath, I told her that I certainly should not think of ordering any thing ; that I had sufficient,—as I should, on the return of Father Felix, I made no doubt, be settled in some humble station, where I should be content, I had not a wish for finery.”

“ Hey day ! why, I suppose, you will turn nun.—What do you think of looking through a grate, your eyes turned to heaven,—your hands across your breast,—and your thoughts at the same time running on a pretty fellow ?—or of being obliged to rise at midnight, and go to chapel,—your teeth chattering with cold,—muttering over your prayers, in such a way, as a bystander would find it a difficult matter to know whether you prayed or was swearing at your abbess, for forcing you from your warm bed ?” She described a nunnery in so ridiculous a light, that I could not forbear laughing. After she had finished, she again pressed me to order some clothes, which I peremptorily refused ; told her, I would take a walk to the convent where Father Felix resided

refided: he might be returned, and would be uneasy at not seeing me; and would likewise enquire for a lodging, having intruded on her goodness too much.

“ Prithee, say no more: I have ordered one of my women to sleep out, and you shall have her room, a most excellent one: why you would not go running about by yourself? I should hear of some beaux carrying you off; besides, did not you tell me, you expected your maid to call on you this morning? I will send to Father Felix; if he is come back, he will inform you where he chooses to meet you.” There was such reason in what she proposed, that I consented; and Antonio was dispatched to the convent.

“ I expected my maid every minute, and was determined, on her arrival, to send her after a lodging. Dinner-time came:—my Maid had not made her appearance.

“ Madame Villeroy perceived my chagrin and took pains to remove it, representing that she was most likely taken up with endeavouring to learn news of Mr. Mazirire. She helped me to what she thought I should like, insisted on my drinking

drinking a glass of wine. I was obliged to comply, to stop her importunities.

“ I now became seriously uneasy, hearing Father Felix was not expected for a week. I was going after lodgings, when I met Madame Villeroy on the stairs: she seemed surprised when I informed her on what account I was going out; said, “ I thought you had fixed not to go till you had seen your maid.—if I would not honour her, by remaining longer at her house, she would accompany me, after we had taken a cup of coffee.” I knew not how to refuse: I was fearful it would make it too late, if I stayed any longer. She assured me, the coffee was ready, and would not detain us five minutes; took me by the hand, and led me to the drawing-room, which she told me was the coolest; it was some time before the coffee was brought, though she had said it was quite ready. She appeared to me a long time drinking it; the heat scalded her mouth. A rap at the door made me start; the servant announced Lord Raymond, who followed him into the room. I was disconcerted by his appearance; it prevented me from going out; nor did I choose to mention my having such an intention, both to prevent him from knowing of my removal, as well

well as the offer of his carriage, which I was fearful he might insist on. He made an apology to Madame Villeroy for his intrusion; then addressing himself to me, congratulated me on the recovery of my looks, which, he was pleased to say, were more beautiful than ever.—“ Then, my Lord, my looks are very inexpressive of my feelings.” “ What an envied man will he be whom you will honour with your heart, which contains such virtues as will render him constant to your charms!—such charms—as unite in no other woman!” I made no answer to this rhodomantade.

“ Madame Villeroy did it, however, for me; she agreed to what he said, telling him, what pains she had taken to remove my melancholy, though I was not polite enough to be ruled by her advice; nay, that I was going out to take a lodging when his Lordship came.” I was highly provoked; told her, I thought she acted with great impropriety. I was certainly to judge, in the absence of Father Felix, what was most prudent for me; her house was infinitely too splendid for my present state of fortune; that I had reason to apologize for the inconvenience I had caused in her family. She had mentioned, that I was going
after

after lodgings; I was sure his Lordship was too polite to detain me. He appeared astonished at my declaration; was sorry he had called at so late an hour; that he should conclude I must act consistently, and therefore would not attempt to quit Mademoiselle Villeroy that evening, he might almost say night, as the sun was now setting."

"Indeed I perceived it was; I knew not what to do, whether to stay till morning, or instantly quit the house. Whilst I was in this dilemma, Madame Villeroy left the room; his Lordship caught hold of my hand, and, with a warmth that alarmed me, threw himself at my feet, protesting, that I had such possession, he would not say of his heart, but of his soul, that he felt the agonies of the damned, since he had heard my angelic voice, and seen my beauteous face! Should I not give him some reason to hope, now he had fully explained himself, he could not answer for the consequence.—Fear inspired me with art; I dreaded both him and the woman whose roof I was under, who I verily believed, knew of his coming. I had taken notice of some sly looks they had given each other, they thought unperceived by me.

"I told

" I told him I was honoured by his good opinion ; at present the troubles I experienced had deranged my mind ; I was unable to make a proper reply to his declaration ; I made no doubt of doing it in a day or two, in a manner that should be satisfactory to his Lordship. He expressed raptures for my goodness, as he called it ; addressing me in a style of so fulsome adoration, I had infinite difficulty to conceal my disgust ; he intreated me not to leave Madame Ville-roy, of whom he had made enquiries, and found she bore the best of characters. I assured him at present I had no such thoughts. I was all goodness, and, added the vile wretch, " I am all love ! "

He attempted once or twice to snatch a kiss ; I was too watchful to permit it.—
 " Why are you so cruel ? Venus was kind, though not so fair. "

" I grew terrified ; I looked at the window, determined if he offered any outrage, to throw myself from it.

" Madame Villeroy's return, a little calmed my fears ; she asked his Lordship to stay supper ; he was going to thank her, —when I prevented him, saying, I should be glad that night of going early to rest ; but if he would honour us with his company the next evening, I should

be

be in better spirits to entertain him. Lord Raymond said he would come if alive: that he knew not how to tear himself from me; but as I desired it, on account of my health, he would wish me that repose he should be unable to feel whilst separated from me; that I must let him first acquaint Madame Villeroy I had given up all thoughts of leaving her.

“ I bowed assent to his words, though my heart abhorred the fallacy; nor could I perceive any other method to escape. He would salute me at parting, as a reward for the pain he was going to suffer.

“ I felt a relief when he left the house, equal to that which a criminal feels, when under the gallows he receives a pardon.

“ Madame Villeroy waited on him to the door; they had some private talk,—I heard her say,—“ Your Lordship may depend on it.” I cared not what it was, as I resolved to quit her house long before the next evening, and was very composed when she returned up stairs. I desired her to permit me to retire to rest. “ You are right, Mademoiselle,” laughing. “ When I was your age, I loved to go to bed early, for the pleasure of dreaming.—You shall eat a bit of supper first, I am determined.”

“ Antonio

“ Antonio came and laid the cloth ; I ate a piece of tart and some fruit, and again intreated her to let me retire ; she attended me to my chamber, which was indeed a most excellent one, wishing me a good night. I then considered whether I should stay till the next day ; I determined to try early in the morning ; I might meet with ruffians whilst it was dark.

“ I threw myself on the bed, without taking off my clothes ; as soon as it began to grow light, I arose, put as much of my linen in my pockets as I could well carry, softly opened the door, and crept down stairs. I passed Madame Villeroy's room,—fancied I heard her speak,—hesitated whether to return or proceed ; finding all was still, I ventured down ; when I came to the door, found it fast locked ; I had some difficulty to turn the key ; when I did, it gave such a snap as might be heard through the house, and made me apprehensive I should have been stopped.

“ I flew rather than walked down the steps ; I made several short turnings, thinking by that means, in case I was pursued, to elude their search. After walking near an hour, I perceived the door of a church ; the people were going to
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hear matins ; I went in and staid the service, not knowing what the name of the church was ; I found it belonged to some monastic house—judge my surprise, when I saw among the religious, Father Felix, who was one of the officiating priests ! The pleasure I felt at seeing him is not to be described. When the service was over, I placed myself where I should have an opportunity of speaking to him, as he passed. I said, “ Father, let me speak to you ? ” He started at seeing me, bid me go to a confessional chair, and he would follow me. I acquainted him with every particular ; desired to know the reason of his sudden return ; I had sent to his convent yesterday, and was informed he would not be back for a week. He lifted up his eyes ! said he returned the day before ; that he immediately sent to let me know he would call next morning ; on the return of his messenger, was astonished to hear I had left the house, no one could inform him where I was gone ; the servants belonging to the late Mr. LeMerchant were discharged ; enquired after me at every place where he had an idea I could be ; among others, he had been to Madame Villeroy’s ; in reply to his enquiries, she told him, I had called on her the day before, only staid a short time, though

though she intreated me to make her house my home ; but that I would not inform her where I slept. “ I now find, my dear child, what was her wicked scheme. How ought you to be thankful to that mercy that has delivered you out of her hands ! Real purity will never be left defenceless.” I told him of the imprisonment of Mr. Mazirire, and the occasion of it. The good man was afflicted, and assured me he would go to the different prisons, and endeavour to procure his discharge.

“ I asked him if he could think of a place where I might lodge till he could fix on a situation for my future support. “ Why, Violante, I really do not know of one at this moment ; yet, now I think of it,—I heard our porter tell a gentleman, he had a chamber to let ; his wife is I know a very good kind of woman ; he is now waiting for messages ; I will speak to him ; stay till I come.” When he came back, the porter was with him ; he told me, that was the person whose lodgings he had mentioned ; that I should go and look at them, and, if I approved, might enter them immediately, and send him word. I made no doubt they would do, wished him a good morning, desired the porter to

to shew me his house. He made a low bow, and led the way.

“ I was impatient to be in a place of safety; and, as we walked very fast, were soon at the door. It was in a back street; his wife came; he informed her, I was come to look at their lodgings; that I had been recommended by Father Felix. The good woman, who seemed not highly to approve of my looks, desired me to walk up stairs. She shewed me into a neat room on the first floor; it was the only chamber she had to let. I told her it would suit extremely well; as on enquiry I found the terms were moderate. I told my landlady, for so I must call her, that I had been disappointed in a lodging, which had been taken for me; that I was a stranger to the place, having been sent for by Father Felix, who had the care of me;— I was an orphan; he was going to settle me: I would take possession that instant, if agreeable to her. She said it wanted cleaning, but if I could be satisfied, I was welcome to stay. I gave her many thanks, desired her husband to inform Father Felix, that I was at his house, and wished to see him as soon as possible: he went back to the convent.

“ I ven-

“ I ventured to beg the good woman to procure me something to break my fast, for I was very hungry, giving her money; she was back presently, bringing some fine fruit, cakes, &c. I made her partake of them. She wished me a good morning, telling me, should I want any thing, she would fetch it: then left me.

“ I reflected on my escape: my heart was filled with grateful thanks to the Almighty for my deliverance, and conducting me to the church where Father Felix was officiating, by whose means I was in a place of safety. I went to the window. Opposite to the house was a dead wall, which appeared to belong to a large house that stood at some distance: I could perceive the upper part. It was evening when my landlord returned: he acquainted me that Father Felix would call the next morning, and desired me to be careful of myself till he came.

“ I had seen a young child of my landlady's, for which she was making some linen; I told her, if she pleased, I would help her: she seemed delighted at my offer: I went to work, from which I found a relief. I retired early to rest: the bed was coarse, but clean. I had no
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sooner laid down than I fell into a most refreshing sleep, which lasted till the next morning. I was quite easy, ate my breakfast with an appetite, then took up my work; and after some time had the satisfaction of beholding Father Felix. He enquired how I approved of my lodging. I said, extremely well. He was happy to hear it.

“ He then acquainted me, that he had made every enquiry after Mr. Mazirire: that he had not been able as yet to find where he was, though he was in hopes he should before night, as he had employed an active fellow to learn news of him: that he thought, after I had left him, he would go to Madame Villeroy’s, and hear what lies she would invent, determined not to give any hint he had seen me: he happened to arrive at her house as Lord Raymond was coming out: seeing a carriage at the door, he stopped within a few paces; heard the voices of Madame Villeroy and his Lordship, who appeared to be both in a violent rage, no doubt at your escape: as he got into his carriage, I heard him say, “ I will find her out! perdition seize me else!” When he was gone, I stepped up to the door; Madame Villeroy was in the passage; she could not avoid speaking;

speaking; she was evidently in great confusion when she perceived me. I took no notice of it, only making fresh enquiries after you; told her I was extremely uneasy at not having heard from you.

“What! has she not sent to inform you where she is?” Very strange truly! —Girls act so ridiculous, and are so headstrong, they make one tired of endeavouring to serve them.

“I know not, Madame, what ingratitude you may have experienced from Violante; I fear no such return; blessed with a sweet disposition, which has been fortunately cultivated; I am certain it is from some accident she has not applied to me.” Guilt flushed her naturally orange-coloured face. I looked steadfastly; she tried but was unable to answer.

“Woman, what alarms you? If you know ought of Violante, speak; too sure I see you do; inform me where she is, or I will this moment take you before a magistrate, and force the truth from your lips!”

“She shook in so dreadful a manner, and had such distortions, I was fearful she would have fallen into fits: I called her servant to her assistance: she was not
in

in a condition to give reasonable replies : I said, I would call this afternoon, which I shall do, and trust by that time, to have such an account of Mr. Mazirire as will enable me to get sight of him."

" When Father Felix had finished his discourse, I returned him my most sincere thanks, for the trouble he had taken; asked him what he thought I should do; I had but a trifle of money, which would last a very short time, though I lived with the utmost frugality.

" My dear child, I have been remiss in not informing you, I have money of yours in my hands; when Madame Le Merchant took charge of you, I had near half the sum that was given with you unexpended; I locked it up, thinking I would give it you at some future time; that time is now arrived; I will bring it to-morrow, and in the interim, consider what will be the most prudent steps for you to pursue. Farewel! May the blessed Lord be your protectress."

" When he was gone, I resumed my work; my landlady procured me some provisions. I passed a quiet day and tranquil night, amusing myself at times with nursing the infant, who grew very fond of me, as did his parents, for my trifling service.

" I did

“ I did not see Father Felix till late the next evening. I grew very uneasy, when his presence dispelled my fears. As soon as we were alone, he drew from under his vest a purse. “ Here, Violante, is your money ; be careful of it. Heaven knows what you are to do when it is expended ! ” I would fain have taken only a part of it ; he would take no denial, and I was obliged to receive it.

“ My child, I went as I informed you I should, at the appointed time, to Madame Villeroy’s, who the servant informed me, as soon as I left her, grew better, and in less than an hour, she went out. Some time after, a porter brought a note, which the man shewed to me ; it was to acquaint her servants, she had met with a friend, with whom she had gone into the country for a few days, and desired they would take great care to execute all commissions with dispatch. Thus she prevented me from seeing her.

“ I now went in quest of Mr. Mazirire, who, I had learned, was in the common prison. On my arrival at the gate, I demanded to speak with the gaoler ; informed him I wanted to see a prisoner he had charge of, whose name was Mazirire. “ Oh ! the young man charged with attempting to commit murder. Yes, I have

have him fast enough, I warrant ; I put him on a pair of bracelets will make him a long while eating a good dinner,—though that is a trouble I avoid giving him. The bloody rogue would fain have passed for a fine gentleman ; yet when I searched his pockets, he had scarce any thing worth taking—taking care of, I mean. I gave what trifle there was to one of my fellows.” “ Let me see the gentleman instantly.” He hesitated. “ I shall acquaint the Duke of Modena ; he is his patron.” The gaoler changing the tone of his voice, assured me he had no idea that the unfortunate young gentleman, as he was now convinced he was, had such a friend, or he would never have permitted him to be ironed, much less have had thrown him into the dungeon. “ Wretch ! how dare you punish before the law has pronounced sentence ?—I will complain of you to the Duke ; you shall feel what it is to change conditions with those you tyrannize over.” The fellow was now as abject as before he had been insolent, beseeching me not to complain of him, protesting Mr. Mazirire had been represented to him in the most atrocious light ; he would in future be exceedingly careful how he treated his prisoners ; that he would fetch
Mr.

Mr. Mazirire instantly, intreating me not to insist on going to him, as the stench would affect me.

“ I told the gaoler to be as quick as possible. It was near an hour ere he returned with his prisoner.

“ Merciful God ! what an alteration in his person ! From having the glow of health, he had now a fallow complexion and emaciated body ; his eyes, deep sunk in his head retained none of their former brilliancy ; his irons had been just taken off ; his ankles so bruised with the weight of them, he was unable to walk without support. I hastened to him :—“ Heaven save you, my son.” He lifted up his eyes, gave a deep sigh, and fainted.—Patience forsook my breast. I raved at the wretches who had brought him to that state, and vowed by every thing most holy, that should he die, I would use every means to bring them to condign punishment. The most powerful restoratives were powdered down his throat ; his clinched teeth were with difficulty opened ; he was perceived to breathe, and by degrees recovered the use of his speech. The first sentence he uttered was, to ask how you did. I told him well. “ Then you have made me happy.”

“ I took hold of his hand, to assist him

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in rising ; he was on the floor : never shall I feel again such a sensation, as when a rag slipped from his ankle : he had been fettered in irons too small : they had hurt the bone ; and, in knocking them off ; they could not avoid giving some severe blows, which brought on an effusion of blood : they had tied it up before they let me see him : the bandage having got off, the blood flowed in such quantities, I concluded he must inevitably sink from the loss of it. A surgeon soon came, and dressed his wounds, which, he was fearful, might mortify, though the youth of his patient was greatly in his favour ; the surgeon ordered him to have plenty of the most nutritious diet.

“ I assured Mr. Mazirire I would immediately apply for his release, and made no doubt of procuring it, intreating him to be careful of his health. He still seemed fearful for you. I bid him be quite easy, as by the habit I wore, he might depend on it, you was under my protection. Then addressing myself to the gaoler, told him to hope for my forgiveness by the alteration I should find in Mr. Mazirire. He promised his care and tenderness should answer my utmost wish ; that he should have a chamber to himself, and as much liberty as the prison could afford.

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“ Mr.

“ Mr. Mazirire’s eyes uttered the most expressive thanks: the words he attempted to articulate faltered. I took my leave. As I returned, I called at Le Merchant’s: he was at home. I addressed him in these words: “ On what pretence do you keep in prison a gentleman? You treated a virtuous and most delicate woman, whom he had the highest regard for, with the utmost brutality. As a man of honour, he resented the usage and in a momentary rage struck you a blow:—base must he be who had acted otherwise.” “ A blow,” he replied; “ I don’t know what you call a crime, if that is not one: what, you would have him at liberty to murder me?”

“ Forbear rude man, to utter such untruths: give me an order for his discharge, or I will apply to those who will take such measures as will set your conduct in its proper light.”

“ I then rose up to leave him: he was startled at my words, and asked me what security I could give of his being unmolested, should he be prevailed on to give the fellow his freedom. “ What security?” I answered, “ the strongest: you shall have the faith of a Christian.”

“ Well, I will see my lawyer: if he approves of it, your friend shall have his discharge.

discharge. I know he is gone to spend the day some miles off, and it will be late before he returns. If you will call on me, at this time to-morrow, he shall meet you, and go to the prison; and, if Mazirire gives his word of good behaviour, you may take him from his confinement." I bid him be careful not to disappoint me.

"Holy Father!" I exclaimed, "I wish to heaven it was in my power to second your benevolent actions! Let me assist them as far as I am able. Carry this purse to Mr. Mazirire: he has been plundered of what money he had: Le Merchant will be mean enough not to discharge the demands of the gaoler: there can be no doubt but avarice resides in the breast of so cruel a monster."

"My child," said the good man, "you reason wisely: unused to the world I had no idea that money could be necessary for regaining his liberty." I was unable to prevail on him to take more than five pieces of gold. I felt glad, when he arose to depart. I was inexpressibly anxious for the release of Mr. Mazirire.

"Early next morning I received a note from Father Felix, acquainting me, that Mr. Mazirire was discharged; that

he was so unwell, as to be confined to his bed; he had taken all possible care of him; that he could not call on me that day, but would the next.

"My thoughts were now employed in contemplating the sufferings of Mr. Mazirire.

"I believe you, Violante," said Lady Beaumont. A blush far more beautiful, though deep as crimson, covered her face and neck. "Come, come," said the Baroness, "pursue your narrative: the sweetness of your disposition must necessarily have made you truly wretched for so worthy a man."

Violante having recovered herself, proceeded in her discourse—

"I hardly shut my eyes the whole night, and arose as soon as it was light. I had finished a slight dinner before Father Felix came: he perceived the agitation I was in; and knowing the cause, acquainted me Mr. Mazirire was in a fair way of doing well; that his fever began to intermit; his wounds healed apace, and there was no doubt of his soon recovering his health. I enquired the particulars of regaining his liberty. "I went," said Father Felix, "to Le Merchant's, where the lawyer was waiting for me: finding by his client what

what I had determined to do, and no doubt fearing to appear in his true character, which I have discovered to be the most infamous, he agreed to the discharge, on Mr. Mazirire's word of honour not to molest either Le Merchant or himself. This I promised, on his part, should be faithfully performed: we went to the prison: he gave the gaoler a proper indemnification. I was shewed to a decent room. Mr. Mazirire was laying on a couch: he looked not so pallid as the preceeding day, which I soon found was owing to a fever, occasioned by the agony of his wounds. I gave him joy of his liberty, and told him, if he thought it might be done without hazard, I would remove him immediately: he was for going that instant: I would, however, see the surgeon, and accordingly sent for him: on his arrival, I said, with his permission, I was going to remove his patient. He desired first to see his wounds: they appeared greatly inflamed.

“ Mr. Mazirire was so earnest, that the surgeon thought it most adviseable to indulge his request. I paid the gaoler his demand, which was exorbitant; told him I hoped he would be careful in future of discharging his duty like a Christian;

tian; then ordered a chair to carry Mr. Mazirire to a lodging. I enquired of the surgeon if he could inform me of one: he said no; but that he would accommodate him himself for a few days at his own house, as he felt greatly interested in his favour; was sure his wife would be very tender of him. I thanked him for his offer, which I communicated to Mr. Mazirire, who faintly said, he was unable to express his feelings for the kindness we bestowed on him: at some future period, he might possibly have it in his power to shew his gratitude in a different manner: he was now truly a bankrupt, in deeds as well as words. The chair being by this time ready, he was lifted in. I followed. Mr. Allegar had gone first to inform his lady. When we arrived at his house, he was waiting to receive us. Mr. Mazirire was lifted out, and by his direction, immediately put to bed; he then gave him a cooling draught, and begged he would keep perfectly quiet: I left him to his repose. He desired me to give his respectful compliments to you, which I promised; wished him a good night, and returned to my convent.

“Violante, I have now acquainted you with every circumstance, your
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mind will be at peace : have sure hope, you will never be deserted by a gracious Providence. Farewel, my good child, I must depart, nor shall I be able to see you for some days. Take care, go not out.—Should any thing happen that you should want me, send word by your landlord.”

“ After he was gone, I felt a satisfaction I am unable to express : my heart felt delivered of every care. I nursed my little babe, as I called my landlady’s child. The good folks were delighted at my attention to their boy, who was equally fond of me as his own mother ; and they did every thing that was in their power to oblige me. For some days I enjoyed a calm truly delightful : my health was restored, and my rest uninterrupted.

“ I scarce ever went to the window, fearful of seeing any one who might know me ; and by that means inform Lord Raymond where I was.

“ My happiness was to prove but of a short duration ; as the transient beams of the sun, when it breaks through the gloom of a winter’s sky, only makes us feel his absence with redoubled reluctance. I had not seen Father Felix for a week, though I often heard of him from
Torre

Torré, my landlord, who, one evening, informed me, I should see him the next day.

“ I revolved in my thoughts my future plan of life, determining, by employment, to support myself. My money, though used with strict œconomy, daily diminished ; I hoped it would be sufficient till I was settled ; with this comfortable idea I went to rest, and soon fell into a deep sleep, from which I was at midnight awaked by the cry of—“ Fire, fire, you will be burnt ! ” I started from my bed, and was opening my door, when I perceived the flames on the outside of it ; almost suffocated with smoke, I hastily drew back ; throwing on a loose gown, I rushed to the window, and was going to throw myself out, when I was called to stop : there was a ladder coming. Hardly sensible, I perceived one was raising : ere it was fixed, the smoke had nearly deprived me of life : had I not been lifted, out in one minute more I had fallen with the floor amidst the flames.

“ The first thing I remember was, finding myself laid on a bed, in a spacious room ; a person to appearance a physician, was holding my hand : some female attendants were standing near. As soon as I could speak, I asked where I was :
the

the gentleman informed me, in the house of a person of rank, who had given orders to have the utmost care taken of me.—“Where is Torrè, his wife, and child?” He shook his head: “do not, lady, distress yourself: you shall be informed shortly.”

“I trembled with horror: I was sure they could not escape the fire: a flood of tears relieved me: I fell into a kind of heavy slumber, which I since learned was owing to a strong opiate. Whilst I lay in this state, I often started, and was under great disquietude, as the effects of it began to lose their force. I regained by degrees my understanding: I desired one of the attendants would give me pen and paper: it was brought: I wrote Father Felix what had befallen me, intreating him to come immediately. The servant said she would give proper information where I was, and would send instantly. I took some refreshments, and intreated to be informed who it was I was so highly obliged to: I observed they did not give me a direct answer: they whispered each other. I felt alarmed, and repeated my question. The door opened,—when, heaven and earth! who should enter but Lord Raymond!

“Violante,” said he, approaching the bed, “you are in my house: I saved you from the flames: returning home last night, I heard the cry of fire: I ran to the spot, and perceived you: you was going to throw yourself out: I called to you: I hastened up the ladder: I brought you down, at the hazard of my life, and trust you will not prove ungrateful: be assured you have nothing to apprehend: I will offer you no injury: look not on me with terror: it is true, I am the fondest of lovers, yet actuated by honour.”

“If, my Lord, honour rules your actions, now is the time, when it will shine in its brightest lustre. I have wrote to Father Felix: he will thank you for the assistance you have so nobly afforded me: as to myself, far from proving ungrateful, I shall, to the latest hour of my life, think of you with esteem: every ill opinion will vanish, and I shall daily pray for your happiness.”

“He bowed, as I hoped, assent; told me he would not trouble me longer with his company, begged me to be easy, just touching my hand with his lips, made a profound bow, and left the room. I really thought he acted from principle; that Father Felix would soon arrive
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and remove me, where I cared not, if he approved of the people. I recollected I was destitute of money and clothes, and my poor pittance was totally destroyed.—Hope presented herself to my eyes, and the garment of charity offered assistance: Father Felix was director of the consciences of many persons of rank: some one would at least give a present supply. Perhaps I might prove useful as an upper domestic to attend their ladies or children: with what attention would I execute their commands!—For some hours, these flattering ideas amused my anxious heart.

“A servant brought me word Father Felix was confined to his bed by a fever, and was delirious: I gave no credit to the message, but was prudent enough not to betray my thoughts. I only said, I was extremely sorry, and desired the servant to call me a chair.

“Lord Raymond entered the room. I repeated my request.—“Where, Mademoiselle, would you choose to be taken?”

“That, my Lord, I must intreat you will not ask.”

“This,” said he, “I suppose you mean as a specimen of your gratitude.”

“I mean it, my Lord, as a test of your professions of honour.”

“Why,

" Why, truly, Mademoiselle, if my honour is only equal to your opinion of it, a small quantity is needful; however, I will be quite candid, and inform you, no servant dare get you a chair, or permit you to depart from this house: they are not to be flattered; and, I humbly presume, you have no great sources of bribery: whatever they can do to serve you, without disobeying my orders, they will; you will excuse more.

" At the conclusion of this insolent speech, he offered to take my hand, which I drew back, hiding my tears as well as I was able; and asked him what he proposed by this method of proceeding?

" I propose, Violante, in time to gain your love: you shall find me the most faithful and affectionate of men."

" Very fine, my Lord: well, time may do much: at present, the horror of what has put me in your power, prevents me from thinking on aught else.

" Poor Torr , his wife, his babe! all gone!—their's was a tremendous, a horrid dissolution!

" For once," he replied, " I am sure to please you: I have made enquiries after them, and am informed they are safe: they were the first that gave the alarm:

alarm: they could not come to your room, as the stairs were on fire, from fuel kept in a closet under them: it is supposed a spark fell from a candle, and, after smothering some time, burst out with irresistible violence."

"I was relieved by this intelligence; and still more, when I was informed he had sent them a handsome donation. I gave him a look that expressed my satisfaction. Joy sparkled in his eyes: he then informed me he had ordered a proper assortment of clothes, which, as he knew the delicacy of my sentiments, he would not offer as a present: at a proper time, he would let me know to what they amounted. There was something so considerate in this, that I could not but approve. I returned him my acknowledgments: indeed it was impossible to stir, till I had procured some decent raiment. He said, they were ready: when it was agreeable, he would do himself the honour of attending me: then ringing the bell, told the servant to bring in the apparel, and retired.

"When I beheld what expensive articles he had purchased, I trembled with fresh apprehensions. I will not dwell on such a subject: suffice it, every thing was profuse: nothing omitted to ornament or
improve

improve the person. I was asked by the maid, if I would rise and try how they fitted me: with her assistance, I put on the plainest dress: I was faint: she desired me to take a cup of coffee: I did, and found it of benefit. I desired her to leave me: then throwing myself into an elbow chair, began to meditate how to effect my escape: the room I was in, looked into a court, round which were apartments of the domestics: the windows were likewise strongly secured. I perceived it would be impracticable to attempt my deliverance that way. Every time the servant left the room, she locked the door, which, I observed, opened into a large apartment. I fancied it looked into the street, as I plainly heard the noise of carriages when it was unlocked for the admission of the air, which I complained greatly to want. I desired the girl would leave it open. She made a courtesy, and fastened it as before.

“ I had every thing to dread; therefore determined to use every method prudence could suggest to avoid destruction. If nought could avail, I was resolved to lose my existence, rather than submit to his vile purposes. Filled with these melancholy reflections, my heart almost

almost ceased to vibrate; nor did I perceive a storm gathering, till a loud clap of thunder broke nearly over the house, followed by a deluge of hail and rain: the hailstones were so large, as to shatter the windows in the front of the house, and greatly damaged the roof, as the wet coming through the ceilings demonstrated.

“The servants were in confusion, running through the different rooms, which had received injury: mine not being of that description, they did not enter: after some time I heard the voice of his Lordship, giving orders for the necessary repairs, which he said he would have instantly set about. I heard him in a low voice, ask the girl that attended me, if I was dressed: she told him, “yes,” — “That is well.” Something else he said I could not understand. She replied, “I will be cautious, hush, hush.” He opened the door: after hoping I had not been alarmed by the storm, he paid me a profusion of compliments on the recovery of my looks, swore, though I was ever beautiful, I now was too radiant to gaze on; with many more fulsome, ridiculous expressions. I told him, when he had ran through his eloquent harrangue, the storm had done him more injury than he suspected.

“What

"What is it you mean, Violante?"

"My Lord, I apprehend your intellects are deranged, or it is impossible you could have uttered such nonsense."

"You are perfectly right: my intellects are indeed affected, not with thunder,—but love. Yes, most divine creature, I am expiring by the tortures your cruelty obliges me to undergo. Suffer me to utter my complaints."

"I am no physician, my Lord, and understand nothing of complaints."

"You witty, provoking charmer," taking me by the hand, which I tried in vain to snatch away, "I will make you understand my complaints."

"My Lord, will you follow my prescriptions?"

"I won't promise: let me hear them."

"First, my Lord, be pleased to remember, you this morning made great professions of honour: what meaning your *Lordship* gives to that word, I am at a loss to imagine. I have ever thought the possessor of honour would be incapable of doing a bad action: take care, my Lord, that your's is not *false* honour, which is too apt to usurp the place of real honour, and shew itself, by urging men to destroy each other, or tempting them to crimes *true* honour would shudder at."

"Enough,

" Enough, enough, Violante : I will hear you when I am going to turn friar : at present that is not the case :—upon my soul, your preaching has made me quite stupid : I am going to open the evening with a large party, and must drink a bottle of claret ere I recover my spirits. I shall hope to have your company to-morrow at breakfast, and will then inform you, what I am determined shall be your fate.—Farewel, my dear, preaching, freezing Venus ; but, by jupiter, I will thaw you into love." He by force took a kiss ; had my lips been poison, he should have felt their power. I tore from his arms, and execrated his actions. He was fearful of provoking me further ; besought me to be easy ; talked again of his *honour* ; then wished me a good night.

" Soon after the servant brought supper : I took a bit of cake and some grapes, and afterwards drank a glass of water : she would fain have had me take a glass of wine : I was fearful, and refused. When I had finished, I desired her to leave me, as I should not want her again.

" I have orders, Madame, not to quit your room before morning."

" What is it you mean ?"

" My

“ My master, Madame, is apprehensive you may be unwell in the night.”

“ What, are you to sleep with me?”

“ With your permission, Madame; otherwise I shall sit up.”

“ Unable to refuse, I consented to her sleeping with me: indeed I looked on it as a good omen, and concluded I was that night safe.—Prior to my going to bed, I was careful to see the door fast locked: she took the key, put it into her pocket, and secured it under her head. I soon perceived she was asleep. Could I get at the key, without waking her, what would be the consequence, should I not succeed? How unlikely was it I should be able to open the street door! I made no doubt he had given strict orders to take care of it.

“ Tired nature after some hours yielded to balmy sleep: happy state of insensibility! and aided by fancy, it maketh the indigent rich, and the wretched happy! I awoke not till near seven o'clock, as my companion informed me: she asked me if I had not heard a noise from the workmen's raising a ladder, to mend the roof? “ I have heard nothing: let us rise.”

“ I will bring your breakfast, Madame.”

“ May

" May I not walk into the next room, to see what damage the storm has done ? "

" I will indulge you, Madame, if you promise not to stay. "

" I assured her I would not : the glass was shattered into a thousand pieces, and the floor strewn with the fragments, which I scarce looked at ; my thoughts being occupied by observing the ladder against one of the windows. I asked the maid if that was what she heard. " Yes, indeed. Come Madame, you promised to return directly. " I had barely time to see the house had a large court before it, secured by iron rails. My door was again locked, and I left.

" A thought occurred, that, by means of the ladder, I might free myself once more, could I gain a respite for a few hours : I hoped to effect both purposes.

" It was noon before Lord Raymond made his appearance. His countenance plainly indicated the excesses of the preceding evening, or rather morning, as he informed me he did not come home till four o'clock, acquainting me he had ordered his porter not to stir from the door, fearing he might otherwise disturb me.

" Heavens ! what a situation should I have brought myself into, had I ventured down !

" I am

"I am now, beauteous Violante, come to wait on you, and trust you have too much tenderness to force me to any act of violence, which, if you persist in giving me no hopes, you will urge me to."

"Let me not think you capable of such cruelty:—rather, my Lord, let me think you incapable of such villainy. You do not carry in your face aught of such a dreadful purpose. Why should you wish to degrade one, who has felt more than the proportion of human ills? And the inward satisfaction of innocence, is the only riches I can call my own, which I would not exchange for a diadem."

"Romantic girl! you entertain such ridiculous notions as make you fit only for the society of antiquated virginity. I will rectify your mistaken ideas, and learn you the superior raptures of love—

"Love, free as air,

(which, as our poet says)

at sight of human ties

* Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies."

"Yes, my charmer, you shall know the blessings that await you: give this paper a candid perusal: in the evening you shall inform me of your final determination."

mination: a cursed engagement with some of my countrymen, who leave this place to-morrow, prevents me the honour of dining with you. I will break from them as soon as possible."

"After many rapturous speeches, to which I made slight answers, he went to dress, leaving me the paper: it contained promises of jewels, and a settlement of six hundred pounds a year, if I would live with him: that I should be treated in every respect as a person of rank; and (*the ceremony excepted,*) be to him the dearest of wives.

"After I had read his fine proposals, I smiled with indignation at the poorness of the bait. How foolish, as well as vicious, must the mind of a woman be that pays the least attention to a man whose avowed purpose is to make her contemptible! "However, I would not enrage him, and, in my answer, begged for a few days to consider his generous offer; in the mean time, I besought him to behave to me in such a manner as might gain my confidence: having finished my reply, I grew more cheerful. I perceived by the looks of my attendant, she was confident of her master's success. I had several times endeavoured to learn how long she had lived with him. She gave me only evasive answers.

"About eight o'clock, Lord Raymond made his entré.

"Well, dear Violante, will you say you are glad to see me? Sure the time has appeared rather long; at least, if it bears any proportion to the feelings of my heart!—Not let me touch your hand!—you should at least hide your disgust:—you would be more kind to that fellow Mazirire."

"If Mr. Mazirire, my Lord, had ever behaved unbecoming a gentleman, I should have despised him."

"A pretty compliment to myself! Come, my little nun,—tell me, is your answer ready? May I date my happiness from this hour?"

"Your Lordship will, I trust, be satisfied: to-morrow I hope you will inform me you are so:—to-night let me intreat you will say no more on the subject."

"How can I avoid talking on a subject on which my existence depends? Yet, to shew the absolute dominion you have over me, I will defer till to-morrow reading your answer. You have considered the fatal consequences that will follow should you refuse that to love, which must else fall a sacrifice to vengeance."

"I shook with terror, but endeavour-

ed

ed to put on a look of ease; told him, with a smile, I had, on considering the generosity of his character, and my total inability of escaping, brought myself to approve his noble offer, and desired only a few days to make me worthy of his intention.

“ He looked at me as if he was doubtful of the truth of what I had been saying.

“ May I believe my hearing! or has some courteous spirit assumed the form of Violante? Let me be certain”—catching me in his arms, and pressing me to his bosom, in so ardent a manner, as to give me pain: struggling, I got from him—“ Adorable angel! What words can express my transports!”

“ Do not be so impetuous, my Lord: my health is at present indifferent: you will greatly oblige me if you will now leave me.”

“ I shall pay you then an early visit, and hope to find you dressed in a manner worthier your perfections.”

“ I complained of fatigue: he took the hint, snatched a kiss, and retired.

“ The servant asked if I would choose her to sleep with me? “ Certainly, and beg you will make haste. I am unwell.” When I found she was asleep, I made
two

two or three efforts to get at the key, which she had again placed in her pocket, under her head. I succeeded in my wish: then softly getting out of bed, I put on my clothes: the door easily opened; all was still. I went to the window; the moon shone bright; the ladder remained as before; the sash creaked as I threw it up:—I looked out. I had a great height to descend: should I miss my step, I must be dashed to pieces. I took hold of it: I shrunk back. How long I might have stood in this predicament is uncertain, had I not heard the servant cough: the terror of her missing me, took from me every other fear:—catching hold of the ladder, I hastily descended. When I had reached the ground, I hoped I was safe; but was stopped by the iron rails, which, in my confusion, I forgot. I was now quite frantic, for I perceived a light in the room I had left: I felt myself possessed with unusual strength: placing my foot in the ornamental part of the iron, I got over the gate, as the house-door opened. I ran swiftly, for I was pursued; my foot striking against a loose stone, I fell: as I was rising, his Lordship caught hold of me. I screamed with terror, and besought help. “Devil,” said my Lord, “come back, or—!”

“At

"At that instant, a man said, "Why do you offer outrage to a female? Let her go."

"She is an infamous strumpet," he replied, "who has robbed me, and I will deliver her into the hands of justice."

"Oh! no: save me from his wicked intentions!"

"Is not that the voice of Violante?"

"I am Violante."

"Monster, who ever you are release her this moment——!"

"They both drew: the stranger's face being turned towards his Lordship, I had not seen him:—by a glance I caught, as he drew his sword,—who should I behold as my champion but Mr. Mazirire! To defend himself, my Lord let me go: his domestics had taken a different route; and, though he called repeatedly, they did not hear him. As soon as I was at liberty, I made the utmost haste from them. I rambled about a long time: at length the day began to break: I was scarce able to crawl, when I perceived a poor, but decent looking woman: I enquired of her, what part of the town I was in: she informed me. "Pray am I far from the convent of C——?" "Yes, Lady, you are a long way: it is at the other end of Milan." "Good Heavens? how

how

how shall I get there? I am ready to faint."

"If, Lady, you will rest yourself in my humble habitation: you are close to it."

—"Thank you, good woman, I will."

"It was, indeed, a poor, but neat one: she informed me, she was a widow, had no family, and got her bread by washing; that when I met her, she was going to her daily employment, which she would give up, if I would permit her to get me some refreshment. "Goodfriend, I am unable to pay you for your trouble. I was forced to fly from a villain, and have not any money. Yet, if you will carry a letter to Father Felix, at the convent of C——, he will enable me to shew my gratitude."

"Think not, dear Lady, poverty has taken from me the desire of doing good: let me have the satisfaction of being useful: first, partake of what little I can set before you: afterwards, write your letter: while I am gone, rest yourself: my mattress is clean, though hard: no one will come to disturb you."

"She set before me some bread, fruit, and milk, urging me to eat. She observed my looks, then checking a rising sigh, said, I have known better days; they are past; the will of Heaven be done!"

"After my repast, I set about writing; for she had pen and paper ready. I acquainted

acquainted Father Felix with what had befallen me, entreating his advice, and, if possible, that he would call on me that afternoon. The worthy woman put her couch in order I promised I would lay down: she took my letter, locked the door, and taking the key, which I desired her to do, departed.

“ Soon after I lay down and fell asleep, which lasted for some hours. When I awoke, the good woman was sitting by me: she enquired how I had rested, told me, she had been some time returned; that she had seen Father Felix, who desired her to say he would come the next day: sooner was not in his power; that my letter had relieved him from the most dreadful anxiety: “ indeed, young lady, he shed many tears, and besought my care of you in a parental manner: I assured him of it, and received his blessing. You must be hungry: see, I have a boiled fowl ready.”

“ Her words, her actions, all proved she had filled a far different station. I arose, and with a grateful heart partook of her bounty. She endeavoured to divert me in the most engaging manner; and, after we had finished, she returned thanks to that Being who had humbled, not destroyed her; who, though he had deprived her of riches, had still prevent-

ed her from want; and on whom she firmly relied. She proposed going early to rest, as she must rise soon, to go out to work; that she would leave the key, as Father Felix would pay me a visit; and there was provision in the closet. We ended the day in prayer: then with calm minds resigned ourselves to rest. — She awaked, wished me good day, desired me to be careful of my health, and left me. I got up, locked the door, and again lay down.

"I ran through every occurrence of my life. Why should I despair, who had so often felt the protection of Providence? This gave me spirits: they again sunk, at the danger in which I left Mr. Mazirire. Perhaps he was now breathing his last. Father Felix, sure, would be able to inform me.

"The good woman, who had taken me under her protection, shewed such a resignation to the will of heaven, as filled me with admiration. I determined to copy her example.

"After some time I arose, and opening the closet, found she had amply provided for my wants. I prayed for the excellent creature, and vowed, if ever I had power, to make her happy, or, at least, ease the remainder of her days.

"I began to fear Father Felix was unable

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unable to find me: at that instant I heard a rap at the door.—Trembling, I enquired who was there. “Father Felix.” I let him in. “Heaven blefs my child, and keep her virtuous!—Violante, let me hear all your sufferings. My prayers have been unremitting:—Heaven has granted my request: I have returned humble thanks for your safety.”

“I told him every particular; I then desired him to make me acquainted with the fate of Torr , his wife, and child. “They are well: their greatest trouble has been for you. I told them this day you was safe. “Thank God,”—said the poor fellow: “the merits every thing, and I am sure will be happy: as they had lost their all, a charitable subscription was set on foot: they are now in easier circumstances than before the accident happened.”

“Father, has Mr. Mazirire been with you? I fear for his safety.—Lord Raymond must soon have been surrounded by servants, ready to fulfil any base orders he might give, and they were highly enraged against each other.”

“Patience, my child, I will inform you. I have seen Mr. Mazirire yesterday: he was at our Convent: I was just come from matins, and he hastily enquired

ed if I had heard tidings from Violante.—
 “ I have not.” “ Then I shall go distracted,” I apprehended the worst, and could scarce ask what he meant. He told me of his rescuing you; that you had fled whilst he was engaged with Lord Raymond: he was in an agony at not knowing what might have befallen you. “ Fear not,” I replied, “ virtue is the care of heaven: our blessed Lord will protect her: you need not be alarmed on her account how parted you with his Lordship? Sure there is blood on your sleeve.” He smiled—“ Father, you are right: it is that of a villain: I fancy he is incapable of further mischief, or my sword has proved deceitful.”

“ How, my son you have not committed murder!”

“ Holy Father, forgive me: had I not disarmed him, he would have destroyed me: after a few passes, which I put by, his fellows were going to seize me, when, doubly enraged, I made a desperate trust: my sword went through his body: he fell: and, whilst his men were removing him, I left the place.”

“ I blamed his rashness, but recommended him to be prudent, and not by uselessly exposing his person, run the danger of being apprehended. He promised

mised to observe my directions; yet, ere the close of day, was again with me, to learn news of you. I shewed him the letter you had sent, at which he expressed the utmost satisfaction, I had some difficulty to prevent his coming directly to pay you a visit.

"I have promised he shall come with me to-morrow. He assures me, he will not leave his lodging till then, being informed, Lord Raymond is at the point of death.

"My dear child, tell me what plan can be thought of to settle you? Here you cannot long remain. Your hostess is already pressed hard by adversity. You will not, I am certain, add weight to her troubles."

"God forbid, Father; I would rather get my bread by the most menial employment."

"That, my dear child, you are unable to do; neither is it necessary: the education you have received, will make you useful in some good family, either as companion or governess. Do not you recollect in the circle of your acquaintance, some to whom your services might be agreeable? I will apply for you."

"Ah! Father, I had rather you could find

find me a situation, where I was totally unknown. Pride is too apt, on the most trivial play, to insult those whom fortune, from being their equals, has reduced to the state of dependants."

"Well, Violante, I will try, and let you know with what success to-morrow: till then, farewell! Recommend yourself to your blessed Lord, and hope the best. Adieu!"

"When the good woman returned, I informed her of Father Felix's visit, and what he proposed to do. "Well, dear Lady, heaven grant he may succeed: yet let me assure you, till that is the case, my roof, my mite, are truly at your service."

"I threw myself on her bosom, and wept my thanks. She dried my tears. After a slight supper, we ended the day as the preceding. I awoke early, and perceived my companion was busy. "I will get up." She smiled. "Stop a little, Lady, I will bring you some clean linen."

"My dear friend, I have, you know, only what I wear."

"That is true: they were soiled: I got up, therefore, somewhat sooner than usual, and am now washing: do not rise yet: you will be tired before night:

I will

I will place some clean, but coarse apparel by you."

"How you distress me with your repeated acts of kindness!—Never can I make you a return."

"Well, Lady, then oblige me so far as not to mention such a word. I am happier than I have long been, and make no doubt you will be advantageously situated I must hasten to finish."

"She soon after wished me a good morning, and went away."

"I found a neat stuff gown, and clean linen, ready for me: the clothes fitted pretty well. I had the vanity to think I never appeared to more advantage. About noon, I expected Father Felix, and waited for his coming with impatience."

"I heard the clock strike one—two—three!—no Father Felix!—Surely Lord Raymond is dead,—or Mr. Mazirire apprehended!—My heart sunk at what my fancy imagined he might suffer: I tried to eat: I could not: a glass of water was of service: the hours dragged slowly on."

"Mrs. Laniani (for that was her name) returned, surprised equally with myself, at not having seen Father Felix."

"To divert my chagrin, many things

the

she observed might have hindered him from coming, far different from what I had mentioned. We were going to perform our evening service, when a knock at the door made me start! "Who is there?" "Father Felix." "You are most welcome." Mr. Mazirire followed him.

"Joy overpowered me: I staggered, and had fallen, if Mr. Mazirire had not caught me in his arms. I recovered, and disengaging myself, in a confused manner, returned him thanks: then, turning to Father Felix, told him I had great apprehension something disagreeable prevented his visit in the morning.——" You change colour, my child: recollect yourself: learn to bear evils with fortitude."

"Excuse me, Father: I have not recovered my spirits."

"Violante, be not alarmed," said Mr. Mazirire: "his care of me was the only cause of your not seeing him."

"Care of you, Sir! May I ask——"

"Command, rather; I will inform you!——"

"Late last night a man came to the house where I lodged: he spoke to the mistress, enquired whether I did not live there. She said yes.—Was I at home? I was. She would call me. You need not,

not, I will be here to-morrow. I want to be paid a bill. When he was gone, she came into my room, informed me what had passed, asked me if I could guess who the person was. I told her no: I owed no bill.

“ Well, he was a most ill-looking fellow, and I think means you no good.”

“ I don’t fear him: good night.”

“ When I was alone, it occurred to me, he might be an officer of justice. What should I do? Stay,—be taken,—prove my innocence,—at least clear myself of intentional guilt,—or endeavour to avoid the evils and disgrace I must inevitably suffer!—I determined to be guided by Father Felix. When the family had been some time in bed, I left the house leaving money for my rent on the table. I put my clothes in a trunk, wrote a note, desiring they might be taken care of till I returned.

“ I made haste to the convent of C—: it was a dark night: I got there unperceived:—no admittance at that time, nor for some hours.—At length the door opened. After matins, I spoke to our good Father: he took me to his cell: I asked his direction how to conduct myself: he will inform you further. “ I will, my son. I replied, my advice is, that

that you remain here till I learn news of your enemy. I cannot, prior to that, determine how you must act. I went to the house where Lord Raymond resided: I was unknown. Addressing myself to the porter, I enquired if there was not a sick gentleman, who wished to unburthen his conscience?—"Why, Father, you are misinformed: my master is dying, not from sickness, but from wounds, received in a duel." "Indeed, friend?" "Yes, it is very true."

"Hark ye! you will not repeat what I say:—you must know he had a girl locked up: she would not do as he wanted, and made her escape, by getting down a ladder: the servant who was employed to watch her, (one he had procured from Madame Villeroy, perhaps you may have heard of such a person) awakened as the girl opened the window. Such a noise was presently made as alarmed the whole house! My Lord, cursing his cousin, who had been absent for a week and returned that evening, stared like a madman. After our master we ran into the street. "There she goes," cries Jago. "Ah! that is she," says Spado. Away we all went to secure her, helter skelter, as if the Devil had been striving to catch the hindmost: the wench ran fast,

fast, and a long chace we had before we made her prisoner. Had you seen her, your reverence could not have forborne laughing: she was a lean, wrinkled, old blackamoor, who subsisted by begging, and imagined we were going to confine her as a vagrant. Down on her knees she fell. “Gentlemen, pray let me alone: I have been doing no harm, and am going to sleep under yon portico.” How we all stared! Francisco said, commend me to Jago for finding a pretty wench: Spado too, I suppose, knew her by the fairness of her complexion. We then left her as hastily as we pursued. As we came near home, we heard the clashing of swords: on our nearer approach, we found our master and a gentleman fighting: going to seize him, he ran our master through, near the left side: he fell. Whilst we were removing him, the stranger got away. Mr. Sandiford, who had remained at home, sent instantly for a surgeon: on examining the wound, he pronounced it was mortal; that the lungs not being injured, he might linger a few days; poured some drops down his throat: he came a little time after to his senses, but unable, through weakness, to speak.

“Yesterday

"Yesterday he talked very distinctly: a sure sign, the doctor says, of his being at the last gasp: however, he has told his cousin who it was he fought with; and I fancy he is by this time secured. As to the girl, we have heard no tidings of her. Mr. Sandiford threatens dreadful things shall be done to the villain, as he calls him, if his Lordship dies, which is hourly expected."

"Having got this information, I returned to Mr. Mazirire; we consulted what was the most prudent step he could pursue. I demonstrated the necessity of his quitting Milan this night: he is come to take leave of you, and depart."

"I was unable to refrain my tears: they were accompanied by those of Mr. Mazirire, who held me in his arms: for some minutes we were unable to speak."

"Father Felix broke the silence by reminding us it was time to part, as well on Mr. Mazirire's account as his own, having obtained permission to be absent from his convent at an unusual hour, and the time allowed was nearly expiring."

"Oh!

" Oh ! Violante," said Mr. Mazirire, " how shall I live, when separated from all my soul holds dear ! Tell me, will you think of me with compassion ?"

" I assured him he should often occupy my thoughts, that it would ever give me trouble to think of the unhappy events in which his endeavours to serve me had involved him.

" Violante, if you knew what I now suffer, you would more than pity." He held me to his bosom, took an unresisting kiss. " By this," said he, " I swear never to love another. Will you not give me some hope ? it will support me when I am far from you."

" You, are, Sir, more than indifferent." I snatched up a pair of scissors, and cutting off a lock of my hair, gave it him. He took it on his knees, and held it to his lips.

" Now, dear Violante, you have made me happy. Heaven grant we may soon meet to part no more."

" My children," said Father Felix, " I will pray for your mutual felicity ; be virtuous, and fear not ; you will soon see each other : I will take care of you, Violante. You, Sir, may easily get employment, where-ever chance conducts you."

" I can

"I can stay no longer," he arose. I could scarce speak. Mr. Mazirire pressed me to his bosom.—"Adieu! dearest of women! Father, I am ready," My eyes followed their footsteps. When I lost sight of them, I threw myself in an agony on the bed: the kind Laniani brought me some hartshorn and water.

"Why young Lady, are you so melancholy? Take my word, Mr. Mazirire will often write and inform you of his welfare. Till he is in a situation that would make it prudent for you to marry, it is better for some time you should not see each other."

"I promised her I would do all in my power, and hoped the next day to recover my cheerfulness. It was long ere sleep would ease my weary spirits: when it did, I sunk into a state of insensibility that held me till noon. Mrs. Laniani was sitting, watching when I should wake. She had staid at home, finding I was greatly agitated, and fearing I might in consequence be ill. I was just risen when Father Felix came.

"I am glad you have recovered your looks, my child."

"Father, how parted you with Mr. Mazirire?"

"I went, Violante, with him till we came to the road that leads to-wards

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towards Genoa, at which place he proposed to remain, at least he will stay there some time. Now, my dear, I have news for you:—A lady, who is of a consumptive habit, I fear brought on by the unkindness of her husband, is, by the advice of her physician, going to try what effect change of air and exercise may produce. She sets off for Montpellier next week. I have mentioned you to her in such terms as makes her wish to have your company. I will take you to her to-morrow. It is likely to prove a desirable object.”

“ I told him I would render myself as useful as possible, and sincerely rejoiced at the prospect before me.

“ Next day I dressed myself as well as I was able, and went with Father Felix to the lady: she appeared about forty, was extremely emaciated, and laboured under a bad cough; had been a fine woman, and was perfectly well bred. Father Felix introduced me, and said he would come again in the afternoon, and left us. After he was gone, she asked me a number of questions, which I answered in the most direct terms.

“ Young lady, I was acquainted with every circumstance before, and wanted
to

to try your veracity. I have now an opinion of you, and intreat your company till I recover my health. I am going a long journey for that purpose."

"I assured her of the honour I should esteem it, and sincerely hoped she would return perfectly restored. She shook her head.—"When can you come, Mademoiselle?" "To-morrow, if you wish it, Madame." "By all means."—"In the evening, I will wait on you." I dined with her: she afterwards took a short repose: her cough awoke her. Father Felix came soon after.

"Father," said the Marchioness, "I think myself infinitely obliged: your young friend more than answers what you said, I have prevailed on her to come to me to-morrow. He bowed. "If, Lady, you are pleased at the first interview, I dare affirm you will soon esteem her."

"I made a proper compliment, and returned to Mrs. Laniani: she had been under some concern at my not coming sooner, which was dispelled by my appearance. As soon as he had seen me safe, Father Felix went away, promising to come for me the next evening. I informed her what had passed, and that I should leave her the following day. She

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She wept; yet tried to prevent me from seeing it. When she recovered herself, we returned thanks to Providence for the constant assistance it affords, and with minds at ease, sunk into peaceful rest.

"Next morning, she would not leave me, as it was the last day we should pass together. "I hope not, dear Mrs. Laniani: if I thought so, I should be unhappy indeed. Trust me, I never can forget your kind, your charitable assistance: you have treated me with the utmost tenderness, and shall ever find I will behave with proper gratitude."

"My dear Violante, you are going to reside with a lady of rank: you have no clothes but those you wear—do not interrupt me—in this box I have put some linen and other trifles, you will find useful: they are not so to me: when you grow rich, you will remember Laniani."

"I fell on her neck: "Oh, how you distress me!" She kissed my forehead."

"Come, my love, let us dine: you will else be ill."

"Father Felix came. "Are you ready, my child?" "I am, Father: see what my good friend has provided for me." He gave her a look that would have become an angel. Blessed, he called her, crossing himself! She would carry the box.

"I desired

“ I desired her to enquire after me of Father Felix, which he likewise told her to do. I said I would write to her: she kissed my cheek, and hurried away. The Marchioness received us lying on a couch: she complained of weakness, and looked feverish. Father Felix retired. Shortly after we went to bed: my room was adjoining her's. I often heard her cough. The doctors paid their visit soon after she had left the room: they perceived she grew daily worse, and were urgent for her immediate removal. I had not yet seen her husband: she ordered her maid, if he was in the house, to desire he would come, as the physicians wanted to speak to him. He was on the stairs, and immediately entered the room. — Imagine a genteel looking man, about fifty, dressed in a style to be excused only by the levity of youth; his hair dressed most outre, was loaded with powder, to prevent, I suppose, the mixture of grey and black from being perceptible. It was in vain: the silent hand of time will ever point distinctly to the years of mortals; and the pains taken to disguise age, only render it most visible. In short, he was a fantastic old beau: bowing, he desired to know what commands the gentlemen, had with him: taking no notice

of his lady, though she rose to receive him. "Sir, we intreat you will not let the Marchioness lose an instant: she ought to leave Milan directly." "This day," said the other, "if she was my wife." "Well, my dear, what say you?" Casting his eye towards the door, he replied, "I don't know what to say; you have been already damnable expensive: such another illness would ruin a nabob. Now, you must run from country to country, to amuse yourself, whilst I truly must remain at home, and scarce allow myself necessaries."

"Why, my dear, sure you will not suffer me to go without you?"

"She burst into tears: the doctors looked

"Well, well, you shall go first: I will follow when I have settled my affairs." He then left the room.

"She had a strong hysteric; they said she was tolerably recovered, and before they left her, persuaded her to set off the next day. We were all hurry, preparing for our journey. The Marchioness, in low spirits, which were much worse, after an interview with the Marquis of R——, her brutish husband, who had given her some money to defray her expences, and reproached her for wanting it.

"Early

“ Early the next morning, the carriage was at the door, for she proposed stopping in the heat of the day. Myself and her maid were her companions in the coach. One servant attended on horseback. It was a fortnight before we arrived at this place. I was often apprehensive she would not reach Montpellier. Her complaints hourly increased: she never left her chamber from that time: death made a rapid progress: she willingly yielded herself to his empire, and in a few days calmly resigned her soul.

“ I had written to the Marquis prior to her death, and had not received any answer. Soon after she breathed her last, I wrote him the particulars, and desired him to inform me whether his lady's body was to be brought back to Milan, or interred at Montpellier: that should order her remains to be put into a leaden coffin, which would enable me to wait his determination. In the presence of the maid I took an inventory of her clothes, and what money I could find: it was a trifling sum. I dispatched the servant who had attended us with the letter, giving him a strict charge to hasten back, with his master's answer.

“ I remained

" I remained ten days in a state of suspense ; in the mean time, I had been necessitated to have the coffin soldered up, as the body became offensive.

" The priest you found me with, assisted in preparations for the awful event : he called often on me : the days passed heavily.

" At the expiration of that time, I received a letter from the Marquis, by the post, in which he ordered me to inter his Lady at Montpellier, in the most private manner, highly blaming me for putting him to the expence of keeping her so long, directing me to part with her apparel, and after I had paid every demand, to deliver what cash I had left to a banker. I was to discharge the maid, and might then do with myself what I thought proper.

" This extraordinary epistle filled me with indignation ; at the same time, I felt myself highly culpable in not writing to Father Felix. It was now too late.

" Father Louis called in the evening. I consulted him : and, as it would be less expensive, settled that the funeral should be the next morning. Myself and the maid attended in deep mourning. The girl cried bitterly : as to myself, I wept not, knowing she was released from a savage

vage tyrant, and was now in the mansions of the blessed.

"The next day, I sent for the bills that were owing: I found the money would not discharge them, and sent for a broker, to purchase her clothes: when these were disposed of, and the debts discharged, I had scarcely sufficient to pay the maid her wages: she told me she had seen a young man who had offered to convey her to Milan, for which place he was to set out next morning: he had a strong horse: she might ride behind him: if I did not want her service, she would take the opportunity, as she could not hope to procure a place where she was not known. I said, she acted right; that I would endeavour soon to follow, though at present I knew not by what means.

"I wrote to Father Felix, entreating him to inform me what I must do, having neither money or effects. Inclosed were accounts, which I desired he would himself give to the Marquis; otherwise he might suspect I had embezzled a large sum. The girl faithfully promised to deliver it as soon as she reached Milan. She left me in the evening: they were to set off at a very early hour.

"I was now to experience the most trying misfortune, though, as it introduced

duced me to your Ladyship's notice, I look on it as the greatest of benefits. I was sitting, the next morning, reflecting on the train of melancholy events in which I had been a actor, when the landlady of the house, whom I had scarcely before seen, opened the door, in rather a contemptuous manner: she desired me to inform her, if I intended keeping the apartments for any length of time, as she could now let them to a family. I told her I waited for an answer to a letter on the receipt of which I should return to Milan: that I would by no means prevent her from disposing of them; if she could spare me a room for a few days, I should be highly obliged to her, as I was not acquainted with any family in the place. Sneeringly she said, it was lucky she had so soon known my situation, or she might have have been fool enough to have let me remain. There was now a week's rent due, and she insisted on the immediate payment. I told her in the afternoon she might depend on having it. "Well, if you are punctual, I will let you have a room."

"When she was gone, I began to contrive how to raise the money. I was sure she would turn me out, if I failed, into the street. I expected daily to hear

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from

Father Felix. I sent for the Broker I had employed before, and parted with what clothes I had: they were mostly those the good Laniani had forced me to accept. I had, when I discharged my lodging, scarce a livre remaining!—Good God! what anguish of heart did I not suffer! Dear Lady, I will hasten to a conclusion:—At the appointed hour she came: I paid her. When she received the money, she informed me, she had taken compassion on me, finding I was a pauper. I might stay a fortnight in her house: she could not indeed undertake to find me in food: that would be too much,—tossing her head. I had tasted nothing that day but water. Unable to speak, I followed her into a back room: the windows admitted the rain equally with light: it seemed to have been long the habitation of vermin: it is true, there was what she called a bed, though I preferred laying on the floor.

“ In the evening Father Louis called, and was shewn into a parlour. The girl informed me he was below. I made shift to get down stairs: he was surprised at my appearance. I acquainted him with the cause. He shook his head.—“ Mercenary creature! Would to heaven, Mademoiselle, I was able to render you any

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any assistance. Come to me to-morrow at the church of Notre Dame." " I will, Father."—He was going. I asked if there was not a baker's near where I could purchase a roll? " Yes, my child; I will attend you to one: it is but a few doors." I returned with my purchase; finding the parlour door shut, crept to my garret, and devoured my roll: hunger made it appear the most delicious morsel I had ever tasted. I wished it had been larger.

" Next morning I went to church. Father Louis endeavoured to comfort and exhort me, to have fortitude; he doubted not I should soon hear from Father Felix, who would find means for my returning to Milan.

" Day after day passed: my livre was spent: I finished my last roll the morning before I attracted your Ladyship's notice, and was by you relieved, taken from the depth of misery to the most enviable felicity." She wept, and concluded her narrative.

Lady Beaumont proposed retiring. Violante was fatigued.

Next day the Baroness asked Violante, if she did not think it right to call at the lodgings she came from; there might be a letter from Father Felix,—perhaps one

from Mr. Mazirire. She blushed.—“Your Ladyship is the best judge.” “Then I will order the carriage,” said the Lady. When they came to the house, Lady Beaumont bid her footman desire the mistress to come. She flew to the coach, imagining it was some lady who wanted her apartments.—The Baroness was next the door. Making a low curtesy, she desired the ladies to walk in. “We are not come to see your lodgings, good woman: do you know this young lady? She looked at Violante, then at the Baroness: she was confounded. “Speak, woman?”

“My Lady, I must say, I must own, I behaved rather sharp to the young lady. Sure, had I known more of her, I would have cut my tongue out first. Indeed I have thought, since the day I missed her, she had made away with herself. I now see she met better fortune: if she had but informed me, you was her friend, I would have let her want for nothing. She was a patient soul, that is the truth; and my husband says, patience is a great virtue.” “You are right, in what you have said: I wish you had been so in what you did. You will, I hope, behave better in future. Have you any letters?” “No, Lady.” “Should

“ Should any arrive after this week, let them be directed for Mademoiselle Violante, at Lady Beaumont's, to be left at the post-office, Naples.” “ Yes, to be sure, my Lady.” “ I shall send daily till I leave Montpellier, to enquire if you receive any.” The woman made a low courtesy, and the carriage drove away. They took an airing of some miles. Violante recovered her spirits. Lady Beaumont found her health almost restored : as she had not quite lost her cough, she determined to pass the winter at Naples, and return to England early in the ensuing spring. Her chaplain and steward wrote often; all went on right. She made them easy by writing, assuring them of her returning health, and intentions of coming home. The tenants joy at the news was fervent and sincere.

Violante, by the beneficence of Lady Beaumont, was furnished with a handsome wardrobe : she was expressing her thanks, when the Baroness desired she would look on her as a parent, for she loved her as a daughter; adding, “ my dear, here is a present, you must want a little cash; take this purse; there are fifty Louis d'ors in it; I will take care to replenish it, and charge you to dispose of it in whatever manner you wish.”

The

The day arrived when they were to depart from Montpellier. Before they left it, Violante wrote to Father Felix, imagining he had got her last letter. She could not otherwise account for his not returning an answer. She acquainted him with the happy situation she was then in: that she should leave Montpellier the next day, to accompany Lady Beaumont to Naples, and desired he would inform her of his welfare: was Lord Raymond living? had he heard from Mr. Mazirire? intreating him to call on the worthy Lani-ani, and assure her of her unceasing remembrance; recommending herself to his pious prayers and further instructions.

The weather was fine; the roads in good order: they went by land to Toulon: after staying a few days to rest themselves, and view the different churches and convents, they embarked: a fine breeze soon made them bid adieu to France: it lasted only a short time: they felt the disagreeable effects of a calm: the ship rolled: the sails flapped against the masts: time itself appeared to lose its swiftness; and the sailors, from want of employment, grew quarrelsome. At length a gale sprung up: the vessel seemed to fly before it, and in a few days, entered the harbour of Naples. It was evening

evening when they approached the town. Vesuvius was throwing out flames, accompanied with noise like distant thunder. The moon shone in full lustre. The contrast of light was astonishing! They had viewed the eruption some time, when the Baronefs asked Violante, what was now her opinion of the earth's being sustained by her balloon system, as she was apprehensive it would in a short time part with as large a quantity of inflammable air, as must inevitably occasion it to lose its balance? Violante owned her error.

The boat landed them: they proceeded to an hotel, and enjoyed the pleasure of being released from a small cabin, and of taking possession of a spacious airy apartment.

Lady Beaumont's spirits suffered a visible depression as they approached the place. The image of her beloved, murdered son, rushed on her recollection: they were obliged to lift her from the boat: they carried her to a coach that was waiting, and arrived at the hotel. A few hours reconciled her to the will of Heaven.

For some days they amused themselves with viewing the precious relics of antiquity. Lady Beaumont,
who

who possessed a thorough knowledge of history, explained to her young friend the changes which the face of the country had undergone, as well from the eruptions of Vesuvius, as the earthquakes it had occasioned.

Violante often acted as interpreter; the Baroness having an imperfect knowledge of the Italian language. They were returning from an excursion, when Violante was seized with a sudden indisposition: they were close to the convent of G——s. Lady Beaumont ordered the carriage to drive to the door: she got out, and ringing, desired the lay-sister, who acted as portress, to favour her with a glass of water, there being a lady in the coach who was fainting: she bowed and went away. In less than a minute she returned with the superior's compliments, who intreated the lady might be carried to the parlour where she would administer to her recovery.

Lady Beaumont went to the coach, found Violante unable to speak: the servants carried her in. After they had retired, the superior appeared at the grate: she was a graceful woman, far advanced in years. Addressing Lady Beaumont with the utmost benignity, she enquired the cause of the Lady's illness. After
being

being informed, and feeling her pulse, she said it was occasioned by having been too long in the heat of the sun, and would most probably be followed by a fever. She would recommend the lady to be immediately put to bed; after a few hours rest, she might be removed: there was a room at her service: intreated Lady Beaumont to let her remain there till evening. Violante, who could now speak, complained of being cold: she could scarce raise her head, and had a pain in her side. Lady Beaumont accepted the offer: she was, by the assistance of two nuns, taken up stairs, undressed, and put to bed. The abbess ordered some whey and desired she might not be disturbed.

Lady Beaumont, in the politest manner, thanked her; said she would come for Violante soon after dinner; that her domestics would be unhappy if they did not find her return at the usual hour: to avoid giving them pain, she must now depart: which she did with the less reluctance, leaving her beloved friend in the care of such excellent ladies.—giving her address to the superior, in case any unforeseen accident might make them wish her return sooner than the hour-proposed.—When she arrived, din-

ner had been waiting a long time; anxiety was visible in the countenance of the servants; she informed them what occasioned Violante's absence: in the evening, she trusted to find her so far recovered as to permit her returning. They thanked their Lady, and prayed for the speedy restoration of Mademoiselle Violante's health.

The Baroness made but a poor dinner: the illness of Violante hung on her spirits: she loved her tenderly: was the disorder to prove fatal, the remainder of her days would become truly miserable. She besought the Father of mercy, not to deprive her of such a blessing: if in his divine wisdom he had so ordained it; to grant her a proper resignation equal to the loss she must sustain.

At six o'clock the carriage was ready: her woman attended her: they arrived at the convent. Lady Beaumont told her servant to remain in the coach: she did not intend to stay long. The Lady Abbess had ordered her immediate admittance: on her entering the apartment where Violante was, a lady who sat by the bed-side put her finger on her lips, as a sign to keep silence. Lady Beaumont took the hint; she motioned to retire; the lady followed, and besought the Baroness

roness to excuse the liberty she had taken; that the young lady had been extremely ill, and they observed, rather incoherent in her discourse; as the chilliness went off, a strong fever succeeded; it was not more than five minutes she had enjoyed a slumber; it might prove of dangerous consequence to awaken her; she presented the superior's compliments, who was prevented paying her personal respects by business of the community.

Lady Beaumont was led by the stranger to a chamber a few paces from that of Violante; she offered her refreshments of coffee, cake, and preserves. The Baroness observed the lady's eyes were often fixed on her. Curiosity prevailed on her to enquire what she found singular in her person; it must be something remarkable to occasion the earnest looks of so well-bred a lady. The stranger coloured; and, after a little hesitation, apologized for her steadfast gaze. Indeed she could not refrain, as her features bore the resemblance of a dear husband she had long lamented. Tears streamed from her eyes.

Lady Beaumont comforted, consoled, and intreated her not to renew her afflictions. They were unavoidable, and felt by all the children of mortality: for
her

her part, she had suffered the loss of a most worthy husband, and an only son!— They **sighed**. Word was brought the lady had awaked, and seemed more composed. They walked softly to the chamber; as they entered, she perceived the Baronefs.

“ Oh ! my dearest Lady Beaumont, how kind to come so early ! I feared ——— ” She was prevented saying more, as the strange lady fell lifeless to the ground. Some of the nuns raised her; others brought drops; they laid her on a couch, cut her lace; nature assisted their endeavours; her colour returned; she again looked stedfastly on Lady Beaumont, then desired to be carried into the air.

Lady Beaumont, all astonishment at the effects her presence had occasioned, determined, if possible, to know the reason. Violante took hold of her hand; the Baronefs lifted it to her lips; she found it damp; the whey had been efficient. “ My dear child, you are better; yet I will not think of your getting up. I will come to you early in the morning, and am almost certain I shall find you infinitely better.” Violante acquiesced; she was sensible of the tender concern the Baronefs felt for her recovery, and submitted with cheerfulness to remain that night in the convent.

The

The abbess now waited on Lady Beaumont ; she felt Violante's pulse ; then turning with a smile to the Baroness, congratulated her on the amendment in her lovely charge ; she desired Lady Beaumont to permit her remaining under their care, as the least hurry, or slightest cold would inevitably occasion a relapse. Lady Beaumont rendered her the warmest acknowledgments, and assured the abbess that till she approved of Violante's removal, she would not think of it ; she desired to be informed the name of the lady who was in the room when she came, and if she was recovered ? The abbess acquainted her the lady's name was Mussei, that she was a boarder, and had resided in their convent some years ; that she had a son who was gone abroad, and not having heard from him for a long time, it made her extremely unhappy ; and, no doubt, occasioned her present indisposition ; she was now much better, and desired her compliments to the ladies, with an apology for the confusion her fainting had occasioned.

Lady Beaumont looked at her watch, found it was near eight o'clock ; took leave of Violante and the abbess, and returned home.—The next morning she
awoke

awoke in health, and prepared for her visit; as she entered the room, a lay sister acquainted her the young lady was better; her looks, as she approached the bed, vouched the truth of the information; the fever had nearly left her; she complained chiefly of a lassitude, but had slept tolerably, and was perfectly composed; told Lady Beaumont she had been attended by two of the sisters; when they retired to rest, they were succeeded by two others. The abbess had been often to see if any thing was needful, and behaved with the utmost tenderness.

“ Heaven be praised, my child, that you was assisted by such excellent women! Have you seen Madame Muffei.

“ I have not; dear lady, she sent early this morning to enquire after my health, being confined to her bed by a dreadful head-ache; if it grew better, she intended paying me a long visit in the afternoon.”

The superior had given Violante permission to get up; the nuns assisted in dressing her; she was extremely low. Lady Beaumont advised her to lie down; she was soon able to sit up. The abbess shortly after joined them; her discourse was entertaining, useful, and pious; she had

had from inclination taken the veil, and renounced the world at an age others begin to taste the relish of its fickle enjoyments; she had been handsome; her features were fine; her form majestic; religion sat easy on her, not like the hypocrite, when it is used to cover the blackest sins; nor did it flame with wild enthusiasm, scorching friend or foe who happens to come within its vortex; she abhorred sin, pitied and prayed for sinners; the nuns loved her; she shewed no partiality, neither jealousy or discord rankled in their bosom; harmony and religion were their study and delight.

Some hours passed in the most agreeable manner: the bell summoned to dinner. Lady Beaumont took leave of her and Violante, having previously promised to come in the afternoon: indeed she was eager to meet Madame Muffei, and learn her history: she felt a curiosity she was before a stranger to, and could not be easy till it was gratified,—at the appointed hour she returned to the convent.

Madame Muffei was sitting on a couch by Violante:—after the usual civilities, Lady Beaumont intreated to know what had caused her to faint the preceding evening. She said it was impossible, without she told her whole history, to
account

account for it. Lady Beaumont assured her it would give singular satisfaction. Madame Muffei wiped away a tear, then addressed herself to the Ladies in these words:—

“ My father was a merchant of eminence, who resided many years in this city: he remained a batchelor till he was near fifty: having heard of the stoppage of another merchant, who bore an unblemished character, he called to know if it was in his power to prevent his affairs becoming public: he found him sitting between his wife and daughter, in deep affliction, which they evidently endeavoured to conceal: the scene was embarrassing: a delicate subject to introduce; yet it was absolutely necessary: he began, by enquiring after a ship, in which they had both large investments, and had for some time expected. “ It is not arrived,” was the answer. “ Tears ran down his cheeks: his wife and child felt the sorrowful contagion.”

“ What, my friend, occasions this affliction? Speak! If it is in my power, depend on my will to assist you out of any difficulties in which you may be involved.”

“ His friend grasped his hand; I will inform you all:” he laid the state of his affairs

affairs before him : there was a balance of a considerable amount in his favour ; yet as his property was mostly in distant parts, and the last ship had not brought any remittances, he must unavoidably suffer a bankruptcy.

“ My father asked for a pen and paper, wrote a few lines : “ this, my dear friend, is at your service : should you find it necessary, I have more at your command : I am now in haste : Ladies, will you permit me to dine with you to-morrow ? conditionally, however, not to mention a word of what has passed.”

“ They were unable to speak : their looks demonstrated the feelings of their hearts.

“ On examining the paper, it contained a draft on his banker for a large sum ; it was sufficient to answer every demand. Their joy and gratitude knew no bounds. He sent and discharged what notes were due, and appeared on the Exchange in good spirits.

“ When my father came, they received him with transports : the daughter, a genteel young Lady, about twenty years of age, sat next, and was very attentive : he was charmed with her person and conversation. The next day, he paid them another visit. In short, he
fell

fell violently in love, and soon found an opportunity of letting her know it. Her heart was perfectly disengaged; and my father's person was graceful: the assistance he had so generously afforded, made the warmest impression in his favour. His fortune was large, his behaviour polite. With a modest hesitation, she requested he would speak to her father, whose consent would be attended with her approbation: he bowed: she soon after left the room.

“ Mr. V——t desired to be admitted to pay his addresses to his charming daughter:—his friend pressed him to his bosom.—“ My consent you have, and earnest prayers that she may prove a lasting blessing, which the sweetness of her temper and dutiful behaviour give a fair prospect of her becoming.”—Where all parties are agreed, courtships are seldom of long continuance. Their wedding was celebrated in a few weeks: her parents rejoicing at seeing their only child so fortunately settled. By the advice of their son-in-law, they determined to quit trade. it was many months before his affairs were finally settled; nor did he then receive some large debts that had been long owing. He found his circumstances more deranged than he had any
idea

idea they could have been: his income scarce sufficient to support them in the most moderate way of life.

“ At the expiration of the second year after their marriage, I made my appearance, and occasioned an increase of happiness. My father could scarce suffer me to be out of his sight: my grandmother, who never left my mother's room, unfortunately caught a severe cold: it terminated in a fever, which, in a few days, proved fatal, casting a mournful damp on their festivity. From that hour they would not suffer my Grand father to leave their house, and endeavoured, by the most assiduous and affectionate attention, to remove the melancholy in which he was absorbed; his grief was incurable, and he daily declined; expressed the most sincere love and satisfaction in his children; often had me brought to him; looked on me with delight, and prayed for my future felicity: the power of medicine proved ineffectual: in a short time he was laid by his beloved wife. After their decease, my mother's whole attention was centered in me. My father's fondness for us both was excessive: their years rolled on in the utmost harmony: my education was equal to the fortune my father intended for me: I made a rapid progress in my studies, and their partiality looked on me as a miracle of beauty.

“ I had attained my fifteenth birth-day, when my father received a polite invitation to dine on board an English vessel, requesting likewise the honour of our company, to meet some ladies. My father returned in answer, we would do ourselves the pleasure to be of the party. I was delighted at the dining in a ship, as my parents, care would not permit me before to go on the water.

“ The day came : we got safe on board : the vessel was at a small distance from the shore : we found a large company in the cabin : an elegant dinner was provided ; and a good band of music played during the entertainment. The company consisted of nine ladies and ten gentlemen. In the evening, we went on deck : not the lightest cloud obscured the lustre of the moon.—“ What a pleasant dance we might have,” said one of them. The word was caught : the music played, and a dance begun in an instant. My partner was a young english gentleman. He was in the bloom of youth, handsome, genteel, amiable, and danced gracefully. I was delighted ; he appeared equally charmed. It was midnight before we left off. A damp fell, which we did not observe whilst we were dancing. We got into a boat, and landed. I felt chilly,
went

went to bed : in the morning I was unable to rise. My mother was alarmed at my illness. My father, who had followed her, took hold of my hand : he perceived a redness on my skin. I complained of a difficulty in swallowing : he immediately sent for a physician, who pronounced my disorder was a scarlet fever and malignant fore throat ; desired my parents not to venture too near me, as it was extremely catching and dangerous. My mother told him, no danger should prevent her attendance : indeed, it was her opinion, a mother ought not to hesitate about any risk of life, when the duty she owed a child made it a necessary sacrifice ; if he could order any thing to prevent the infection, she would readily make use of it.

“ My father confirmed her intentions.

“ The doctor took his leave, ordering what he thought necessary.

“ I was in the most extreme danger a fortnight : at the expiration of which period, my dear father had symptoms of the fever ; and in a few hours was worse than myself.—My poor mother’s attention was now divided : as she was alternately attending on my father, and hastening to see if there was any alteration in me. A few days only could my poor father struggle

struggle against the disease: he was seized with convulsions: nature gave up the contest."

Madame Muffei shed tears. Lady Beaumont insisted on her not proceeding till the next day. The abbess thought Violante might then be removed with perfect safety. Lady Beaumont said she would come early, and if Madame Muffei was able, she should hope to hear the continuance of her history.

She then changed the discourse to livelier subjects: she was mistress of the art of pleasing; and, before she took leave, obliterated the concern visible in Madame Muffei. Soon after, they wished each other a good night. Violante slept well, and when she got up, found herself surprisingly stronger than the preceding day. Lady Beaumont soon after arrived, much pleased to find Violante in health and spirits. Praises of the pious superior were repeated by both. She entered the room: Violante threw herself on her knees and kissed her hand. "Rise, my child, to your Redeemer, not to me, becomes that posture. I have done only my duty: if you think yourself under any obligation, remember I lay you under an injunction not to mention a word on that subject."

"Lady Beaumont, is not Violante wrong

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wrong in addressing the creature as she would her Creator?"—she smiled. "My child is full of gratitude: did I not fear to offend your delicacy, I should be profuse in my acknowledgments." The superior bowed.

Madame Muffei entered. The conversation became general. The abbess was wanted. Lady Beaumont desired Madame Muffei to continue her narrative. After a little recollection, she thus proceeded:—

"My mother was for some time inconsolable: had it not been on my account, she would most likely have sunk. I began to recover the day my father was interred, and was pronounced out of danger: they did not acquaint me with his death for a long time. It was apprehended the shock might be of fatal consequence. My mother did not put on her weeds for the same reason. When I had gained sufficient strength, she broke it to me. It is scarce possible to conceive a more affecting scene. My mother had not only to combat with her own sorrow; she had to support my grief. I looked on myself as my father's murderer. She was an excellent Christian. By her discourses my spirits became calm. I listened to her admonitions, and thought, as she instructed me, happiness in religion.

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“ My father bequeathed his fortune equally between us : the only difficulty was, to get his affairs settled : he had no partner. My mother was unacquainted with business. It was necessary to employ a lawyer. She chose one who bore a fair character. I fear it had not been put to the proof : be that as it may, he so managed my father's property, that, far from finding herself possessed of a large fortune, my mother found it a contracted one : it was useless to remonstrate. My father's papers and accounts had been placed in his hands : they were returned in a mutilated state : they could not be rendered of any service : she discharged most of her servants ; parted with the house she then occupied, and took a small one, a few miles from Naples.

“ One evening, riding near the sea, admiring the beauty of the glassy surface, I observed a fishing boat making towards land. I ordered my servant to enquire if they had any fish to dispose of. He presently returned, and informed me the boat was hired by gentlemen : they had caught a quantity, but which they would not sell : before he had well finished, a message arrived requesting me to accept some fish. My servant they would furnish with a basket. Their politeness demanded a return.

a return. I rode to the spot. The gentlemen came round me. I instantly recognized my English partner: he fixed his eyes on me: I felt my face glow.—Heavens, what an unexpected transport is this!

“ I have been racked, Madame, with the most dreadful apprehensions on your account: I heard you was in the utmost danger; that your life was despaired of. I enquired daily after you, till I received the joyful assurance of your recovery: particular business called me to Malta: I was detained longer than I intended: on my return to Naples, inclination led me to your house. I pleased myself with the hopes of paying my personal respects. What disappointment did I not endure when a servant informed me, it was occupied by another family; that your mother was removed from Naples; where he was unable to acquaint, me! I made many enquiries after you, with as bad success. I shall look on the place as sacred which has restored you to my sight.”

“ The other gentlemen finding we were acquainted, withdrew to some distance, which enabled me to reply. I told him our income would not admit of our continuing to reside at Naples; that our
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present abode was only a mile from thence ; that we lived in the most retired manner. My only amusement consisted in riding on horseback. The civility of their offer brought me to return my acknowledgment. He introduced them by their names : each said something on the occasion.

“ I was taking leave, when my partner desired them to stay a short time, as he would accompany me part of the way. In vain I endeavoured to prevent him : he walked by the side of my horse, and would not leave me till I got to my mother's ; then wished me a good night, and hastened back to his companions. A few mornings after, I was walking with my mother, enjoying the cooling breeze, in an adjoining grove, the end of which was bounded by the road leading to Naples, when we perceived two men on horseback riding towards us : as they drew nearer, I discerned one was my agreeable Englishman : he alighted, gave his horse to his servant, intreated my mother to suffer him to take a breakfast at her house, as he had left Naples before the family where he resided were stirring. She assured him he would do her a pleasure and ordered the servant to get it immediately.

“ Our house was small, but elegant,
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and commanded a charming prospect : he paid us many compliments on our taste : his conversation on various subjects shewed a fine understanding, highly cultivated. My mother invited him to stay dinner : the offer was accepted : it was needful to make a little addition : she withdrew to give orders. As soon as she left the room, he addressed me in the language of love. I affected to treat it as raillery. He was too much in earnest to let me long retain that idea. I must candidly acknowledge he was far from indifferent before he declared his passion. He was eloquent. I was artless. Ere the return of my mother, I had given him permission to love me. It was late when he left us. I informed her of his declaration. Indeed she was my confident, my bosom friend. Instead of behaving with austereness, as many would have done, she heard me with attention : mildly told me to take care I did not suffer an hopeless passion to destroy my happiness : at present it was impossible to give her approbation, as she was not acquainted with the fortune or connections of Mr. ———. if he meant honourably, he would seize the first opportunity to inform her of both. He soon paid her a visit.

“ My mother took occasion, when he

was speaking about England, to enquire what part he came from, and if his parents were living?

“ I was born, Madame, in the western-part of that kingdom: early in life I removed to London, where I was placed in a compting-house: my disposition was too volatile to let me long remain easy in such a situation: I wrote to my father my inclination to study Italian, which would be extremely useful in the mercantile line. He indulged my request, and got me letters of recommendation to most of the places I told him I should visit.

“ I bid adieu to my native country, and proceeded through France to Genoa, where I remained near a year; from thence to Florence, Rome, and lastly to Naples.”

“ Do not you intend, Sir, shortly to return? Your friends may think you have forgotten them.”

“ At present, Madame, I have no such intentions. Naples has too many attractions for me to think of resigning.”

“ Sir, that is a polite declaration, though I fear not quite sincere: if indeed one of our Neapolitan ladies has made a conquest of your heart, I don't wonder at your wish of remaining. Let me, however,

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however, give you a prudent precaution, not to endeavour to gain the affections of an aimable woman; then, by deserting, occasion her the most heart-aching torments."

"He was confused. She continued her lecture:—"To act nobly, you must act candidly: if the lady is a proper object of your esteem, write immediately to your friends, gain their consent, then unite in marriage where you are already united in love." She looked at him whilst she was speaking: his eyes fell beneath her penetrating gaze.

"After a short pause, he owned the justness of her sentiments, and trusted his happiness or misery to her decision: he acquainted her with his passion, which was the sole inducement that prevented his return: that he would write to his parents, and made no doubt of gaining their approbation: intreated till their answer arrived, his visits might not be suspended.

"She consented to his dining once a week at our house: oftener propriety would not allow. My return changed the discourse. The day passed agreeably.

"A few weeks only continued this happy period of my life: neither my mother or myself had got through the small-pox: she could not conquer an aversion to inoculation.

inoculation. My father often endeavoured to remove the prejudices she had early imbibed : he could not gain her consent to my undergoing that operation : she was now to feel the effect of that cruel disorder. Near us was a poor cottage, inhabited by a peasant : his wife had several children ; they often had victuals from our house, which was carried by our servant ; an honest, illiterate clown. One day my mother was enquiring if the people were not in great distress ? “ Yes, truly, Madame, and they return you a thousand blessings for your charity : one of the boys was crying with the head-ache, and has got a rash all over his body.”

“ Inconsiderately she went in the evening, to carry some powders proper for a rash : when she saw the child, she was ready to faint : they immediately led her into the air. Soon as she returned home, I observed her look pale. I enquired if she was ill ? “ My dear, come not near me :—the child, Lubin informed me had a rash, I found covered with the small-pox ?

“ I strove to combat her apprehensions : she was too certain :—a surgeon I sent for the next morning, confirmed her opinion, recommended us to avoid animal

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mal food, and use no violent exercise. The infant lived only a few days. I took proper measures to prevent his death coming to her knowledge, and appeared in more than common spirits, to remove the impression her visit had occasioned.

" A fortnight had elapsed; and I flattered myself she had escaped the danger. Like the passing of a swift cloud, were my hopes; the disorder began to make its appearance the next day. Fatal and speedy came the minister of death!—Purple spots and livid paleness gave notice of his approach.—Scarce could she bless me, ere his chilling dart put a final period to her earthly cares: She died to live for ever!

" My lover was at our house. I was carried by him to my chamber, where he assisted in recalling me to life; ordered the surgeon not to leave me; got on horseback, and rode away full gallop. Before sunset he returned in a chaise, bringing with him a physician, who had the character of possessing great skill in the treatment of the small-pox. I was in a strong delirium: he caused the windows and doors to be thrown open. I was lifted off a soft bed, laid on a mattress, and permitted to drink plentifully of cold spring water: his directions were attended

attended with success: in a few hours the eruption appeared very distinctly: my senses returned; my fever abated; the symptoms continued to grow more favourable, and promised a happy conclusion to the malady, which the event verified.

“ I had only a slight sprinkling, and in a few days was pronounced out of danger. As I grew better, my recollection returned;—the loss of my dear mother preyed on my spirits.

“ Mr.——, from the first of my being seized, never left the house, except the few hours he went to fetch the doctor.

“ When I was able to sit up, he passed the most of his time in my company. I learned by degrees that he had taken upon himself the trouble of my dear mother’s funeral, and had her interred in a private, though solemn manner.

“ I had now no relation to consult: I felt myself under great obligations, and expressed my thanks in the sincerest terms. By degrees my melancholy abated: it was scarce possible in his company to be dull. He read, played on the flute, or sung a lively air. I grew habituated to his company. I could not think of
his

his returning to Naples. I did not entertain an idea what injury I was doing myself, by his continuing to reside in the house. We lived six weeks in this manner.

“One morning I ventured to ask if he did not expect letters from England?”

“Certainly, my dearest Serino, and intended asking your permission to enquire after them, as I apprehend there are some now lying at the post-office.” I bowed assent. The next morning he set off, and returned late in the evening. I observed he looked grave and spoke little.

“Have you, Sir, any letters?”—“I have only received one.” A sigh finished the sentence.

“I looked on it as an omen prefaging ill. I pressed him to acquaint me with the purport of his letter. After much intreaty, he informed me, it was from his father, who insisted on his immediate return, as he had proposals of marriage, which would be of the utmost advantage.

“Unable to speak, my eyes bathed in tears, I was the representative of woe, bereft of parents, and relations! His society prevented me from feeling the loss I had sustained. To find I must
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lose him for ever, was too much for the weak state I was still in. — My head swam, my sight failed! — Had he not caught me in his arms, I had fallen at his feet. — When I recovered, I found my head resting on his shoulder, his cheek close to mine: he pressed me to his bosom, uttered vows of unceasing love and constancy, besought me to have the firmest reliance on his honour. No power on earth could tear him from me: he was determined not to leave me again, till we were united in the bands of Hymen. I could not give a negative to his proposal: love seconded his arguments, and pleaded so powerfully, that I consented to accompany him the next day to church: the curate belonging to it had attended my mother in her last agonies: he sent a letter to him, to direct that every thing might be ready, and desired he would procure a decent man to perform the part of a father: a particular circumstance made him wish the marriage might for a short time be kept secret. The good man returned in answer, he might depend on his not mentioning a word of it: his church was in an obscure place: it was scarce possible we should be noticed. My family consisted only of two maids and Lubin.

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it was impossible to think of their not knowing it: I laid both my maids under an injunction not to tell Lubin, or any one else: and they faithfully promised not to divulge it till I gave them permission.

“ Mr.—ordered Lubin to get our horses saddled early in the morning as we proposed taking a ride before breakfast. I must inform you he had parted with his own servant for impertinent behaviour, and had not yet hired another. It was a pleasant ride to the church. I could not divest myself of a dread, that this private marriage would not prove prosperous, if it was against the consent of his parents. His behaviour was affectionate, and so tenderly polite, as calculated to remove my apprehensions. By the time the priest joined us, I was in tolerable spirits, and went through the awful ceremony with becoming decency. We then returned home. My dear husband appeared to centre his whole happiness in my company: each hour increased our mutual felicity.

“ I had symptoms of breeding: he was delighted. “ A child,” he said, “ could plead strongly in his favour with his parents, who were people of large fortune, and had only him. As soon as I
was

was delivered, he would inform them of our marriage, and was certain they would insist on his bringing me to England with all speed."

"Four months I enjoyed this transporting felicity: it was to be succeeded by a life of sorrow. My husband often took a ride to Naples, to enquire after letters. I was surprised to hear none came, though as it did not make him uneasy, it made the less impression on me. He took leave of me early one morning, to take his usual ride, promising to return in the evening."—Here her voice became broken, her sympathizing audience dropped the tear of pity; it trickled down their cheeks, as the morning dew on opening flowers. The mourner hesitatingly proceeded:—

"The hour he had fixed was past; I became impatient; one moment I went to the window, then walked to the end of the grove, where I first saw him on horseback: I continued there, looking towards Naples till night took from me the sense of seeing. Weary and alarmed, I returned home: no husband arrived to dissipate my terrors! At midnight I threw myself on the bed:—slept. —Soon as Aurora made her appearance in the east, I called up the servants
ordered

ordered Lubin to saddle a horse, and dispatched him to Naples, with directions not to return till he had learnt news of his master.—He assured me of his diligence. My heart beat with redoubled violence. I shook with terror. I trembled with wild affright. In vain did my strained eyes look for my beloved. Space mocked their eager gaze. Minutes appeared longer than days. I was on the rack of impatience.—The evening shadows danced on the meadows, when I beheld my messenger approach: his motion was slow: his look spoke horror! “Is thy master coming? Where have you left him? Is he well?”

“The affectionate peasant hid his face beneath his cloak:—motionless and silent I stood: my maids observed it, and laid me on the bed: they sent for a doctor: he found me deprived of my senses, bled me, ordered my room to be darkened, and kept quiet: I lost every trace of recollection: sorrow fled before insanity: my employment was arranging garlands of flowers, which I threw away for mocking me.—I sung verses of my own composing, and laughed at the solemn countenances of my servants: fancied my physician was an evil genius, who kept me imprisoned,
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to prevent my marrying a sovereign prince: and was contriving continually schemes to regain my liberty.

“Three months I continued in this state of insensibility. I then began to regain my memory. From a state of forgetfulness, I passed into a state of profound melancholy. I enquired not into the fate of my lamented husband. I asked no questions. I took no notice of my situation. My physician took infinite trouble to recover me from the grief which consumed my woe-worn frame. I found by degrees his conversation became agreeable; he humoured my disordered imagination; he gently informed me of the necessity of patience. I became attentive to his advice. I followed his counsel; my spirits grew calm; reason once more regained its empire.

“When my mind had gained sufficient fortitude, I ventured to hint my wish of knowing the extent of my misfortunes; he prayed me to forbear my enquiries till a future period, saying, it might prove fatal, if not to myself, at least to the infant I carried. I told him I had been preparing myself for the dreadful intelligence; and was certain I could hear it without those events happening which his humanity apprehended. My
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intreaties prevailed; he acquainted me with the following particulars:—

“ On your man’s arrival at Naples, he went to the lodging his master used formerly to occupy; the first person he spoke to was the landlord; he appeared agitated; on his enquiring, he took hold of his hand, and led him into a back room;—“ There friend, is your master,” pointing to a bed, the curtains of which were close drawn; on throwing them a little back, he discovered him a corpse! his death was occasioned by a wound in the side. After the poor fellow was a little recovered from the shock such a spectacle must have created he learnt that his master had been at his lodgings, where he found a letter, read it, called for a glass of water; then wrote an answer, sent it by a porter, who brought back word the gentleman would attend. It was duskish when he left the house. In less than two hours he was brought breathless back. Early this morning, a gentleman called, who has given orders to a person that came with him, to make a strong leaden coffin, as the body was to be carried to England, to be interred with his ancestors. After your servant found he could not learn more of this melancholy event, he returned

turned home. I have since been informed, that his body was the following night privately removed, and put on board a ship, which sailed the next morning: where he was carried, I cannot learn, as several vessels sailed at the same time."

"Till he had concluded his dreadful narrative, I did not once interrupt his discourse, tho' torne by conflicting passions: tears and sighs were the only evidences I discovered of an agonizing heart: he read what passed in my mind with the solicitude of a parent; he soothed, comforted, and partook of my affliction; nor did he take his leave, till I returned to more tranquility.

"The time of my delivery drawing near, my worthy friend persuaded me to lie in at Naples, where I could be provided with every thing necessary. I consented. A lodging was taken: the following week I took possession. I sent cards to my three cousins, the only relations I had: two of them took no notice: the third wrote me an answer: the purport of it was, "she wondered at my assurance, as the infamous life I had led since my mother's death, would preclude persons of character from entering any house where I resided!" Contempt and pity were the only sensations
her

her letter excited. I have scarce thought of them since, tho' they are yet living.

"A fortnight after my removal, I became the mother of a son, who appeared to have suffered no injury by the misfortunes of his parents. My doctor provided a healthy woman to suckle him, as he feared my attempting it, would injure us both. I christened him the same name as his father, which was Charles."

—Lady Beaumont turned pale, and sighed: Madame Muffei observed the effect, though she dared not to ask the reason, feeling an awe in the presence of the Baroness, which hourly increased. "My dear boy was a source of amusement and sorrow: whilst I folded him to my bosom, my tears wetted his face: every feature bore the resemblance of his father: his innocent smiles filled my heart with anguish, whilst his grasping hands I devoured with kisses. At the conclusion of my month, I returned to the country, where the good physician promised often to pay me visits, which he truly performed.

"When my darling was three months old, I had him inoculated: the eruption was trifling: he speedily recovered, and grew a stout little fellow. Nothing particular occurred the eight following years:

years: my delight was centered in my child: I instructed him in the rudiments of Latin, which I could easily perform, by the help of books my friend supplied me with. His memory was retentive. I made study his amusement. The scholar now began to require an abler teacher to accomplish his learning. I sold my house, and once more returned to Naples. His progress in the languages was rapid. I listened to the praises of his masters with a mother's fondness. My friend assured me, his understanding was of the first rate; and I determined to spare no cost on his education.

"Several years passed in a tranquil manner. I was then to experience fresh trials. I had, as soon as my son could comprehend the meaning of words, told him his father was an English man. As he grew older, I informed him of the catastrophe that deprived me of him, of his body's being carried to England, where his relations resided, who, I had reason to think, were people of fortune. Often did he make me repeat the tale; his cheeks would flush, one moment with rage at his father's death being yet unrevenged; the next, his eyes dissolved in pity for the sorrow of his mother.

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but little of it. His father spoke Italian perfectly well, and chose to converse in it. He purchased a grammar, which was his constant companion, and made a proficiency in the language, without other assistance. I expostulated with him on the uselessness of his study, as I designed him for holy orders, by the advice of my good friend, who flattered me his learning would cause him to rise to the summit of church preferment. His counsel united with my wishes, to secure him from the vices, follies, and passions of the world: those passions, whose unrestrained violence had sacrificed the father, might in a moment deprive me of his son. My wishes proved abortive: schemes far different from my intentions, employed his every thought: he made a practise to rise early, put his books in his pocket, walk till he grew tired; then, under some friendly shade, sit down and study; returning to dinner.

“ One day when he was, as I thought, taking his usual exercise, a porter brought me a letter: the superscription I knew was my son’s writing: my hands trembled as I broke it open,—I laid it down,—I became more resolute,—I read it,—my surprise was equal to the grief it plunged me into: he informed me, his
resolution

resolution had long been fixed to visit England, which he now had an opportunity of doing: he begged pardon for his thus abruptly leaving a mother, whose tenderness and care it would be his glory to merit: that he was impelled by an irresistible impulse to find out, if possible, who was his unhappy sire: when that was accomplished, the next step should be, to trace out his assassin: that duty performed, he would fling himself at my feet, ask my pardon for his wanderings, dedicate the remainder of his life to fulfil my wishes and merit my applause.—I was told by my servant, that dinner was ready: I bid him go instantly to my friend, and desired he would return with him, as an affair of the utmost consequence demanded his immediate advice; fortunately he was at home. I was traversing the room in unutterable sorrow, when he entered. I attempted to speak; tears were my words: he took notice of the letter on the floor, and concluded it would explain the mystery of my present unhappiness: he read it; his astonishment equalled mine; yet fortitude soon restored him to recollection; he endeavoured to dissipate my terrors, by observing, there was nothing in it either to blame or alarm myself:

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from the warmth of youth, and affection to the memory of an unhappy parent, he was gone to perform a laudable, though eccentric, act of duty: that it was not improbable he might gain the wished-for intelligence: as to the intimation of revenging his father's death, it was almost past probability; as at the time it happened, no information could be gained: he made not the least doubt of his returning in a few months: and, for my satisfaction, he would endeavour to learn what vessel he had embarked in, and write to an acquaintance in London, to supply him with cash: he spoke: he appeared a messenger from heaven, sent to comfort, to save me, from despair. I submitted to my destiny.

“Several captains to whom he applied, returned for answer, they had seen no youth of his description, nor had any ship sailed that day, though many were nearly loaded.

“I heard no tidings of him for two months, when I received a letter, dated from London, informing me, of his being in good health; that he had got no insight into his father's history; that he was determined not to return till that was accomplished. He had taken the name of Muffei, till he could learn his father's rank

rank and family; desired I would direct to him, to be left at the post-office in London; concluding with assurances of love and duty. I shewed my friend the letter.

“ I informed him I would now put in practice what I often wished before to have been able to do: that was to retire to this convent. The abbess, I had long been acquainted with: though our friendship, from various causes, had suffered interruption, it had never been destroyed: I had made her frequent visits, and found our sentiments coincided. My worthy friend highly approved of my intentions, and helped me to dispose of my effects. I made my will, settled all my affairs, bid adieu to a tempestuous world, and sought refuge from it in my afflictions, within these peaceful walls, where religion instructs,—faith directs,—hope supports,—and charity leads to eternal felicity.

“ Seven years have now passed since I seen my son. I have, during that time, received but a few letters: the last informed me, he was to leave England the next day; two years are since elapsed! I remain at this time totally ignorant of his fate. I daily offer up prayers for his return; could I once more behold him,

my

my every wish would be granted. Two nights ago he appeared to me in my sleep, led by his father; I strove to embrace them; I held my son; his father leaped from my grasp! At that instant I awoke.

"When I took up my residence here, I dropped my own name, and took the same that my son had done. I see none but my old friend, who makes proper enquiries after letters, and has directions, in case my son arrives.

"I have now concluded the history of a life marked with a profusion of misfortunes. Time has softened their severity. The resemblance of your features, Lady, bore such a similitude to those of my husband, as to cause the emotion which gave rise to your enquiries."

"Lady Beaumont, who felt the strongest compassion and sensibility, returned acknowledgments for the painful task she had laid her under; then said, "Complete your goodness, by informing me the name of your husband? My heart beats with doubt!" She sunk down on the sofa. Madame Muffei and Violante caught her in their arms.

Madame Muffei besought her to compose her agitated spirits; she must prepare to hear a name which would require the utmost fortitude. Tears, the attendant

dant and reliever of woe, fell in torrents from her eyes. Lady Beaumont recovered her speech;—"Keep me not in suspense, if you wish me to remain longer in this clay tenement?"

Madame Muffei hesitated a moment; then pronounced "his name was BEAUMONT!"

"My son!" exclaimed the Baroness; her head fell on the bosom of her daughter. Violante rung for assistance. The abbess's medical knowledge recalled her fleeting breath; the conflict of contending passions, by degrees subsided; she desired to be indulged with a few minutes' private meditations. The ladies left the room. The abbess told Lady Beaumont they would return in half an hour.

Mrs. Beaumont, as she must now be called, retired to her chamber. Violante accompanied the superior, who took occasion, from the scene they had been spectators of, to enforce the necessity of mutability in the transactions of this world: hopes of seeing better days, supported the unfortunate, whilst the fear of impending misfortune, checked presumption in the prosperous; her voice was plaintive; her manner gentle; persuasion and example united with benevolence,

lence, to lead the virtuous to peace, the sinner to the path of repentance. Her young friend listened to her discourse; she forgot what had passed; her soul felt its superiority, and lifted her thoughts to heaven.

The clock struck twelve. "We must return to Lady Beaumont," said the divine woman; "humanity forbids our longer absence."

Violante sighed, — heaven fled. — the world again took possession of her heart. They found Lady Beaumont sitting by her new-discovered daughter, in deep discourse: they motioned to retire.

"My beloved Violante, and you, good Lady, rejoice with me: I have found a daughter! May heaven restore my grand-son!" Her looks had acquired their usual dignity: they congratulated them on their prospect of happiness.

"My child," said the Baroness, taking Violante's hand, "rest assured I shall ever retain the same affection for you, as if this discovery had not come to light. Indeed, could my fondest wishes be fulfilled, they would centre in seeing you united to my grand-son."

"Mrs. Beaumont pressed the hand Lady Beaumont did not hold to her lips. "May my son prove worthy his
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noble relations, and this amiable creature." She blushed!—Mr. Mazirire, not Lord Beaumont, was the occasion. A lay-sister informed them the carriage waited.

"For once," said the abbess, "let me give your servant orders,—“you dine here to-day.”"

"I should not be worthy your friendship, if I refused your request. Let them come in the evening,"

The bell proclaimed the hour of repast. Lady Beaumont requested to dine with the community; they followed the abbess to the Refectory; she introduced those nuns they had not before seen, with a politeness that would grace the drawing-room of a sovereign.

Before Lady Beaumont went, she told her daughter, it would be necessary to procure a certificate of the marriage, to prevent any objections which the next heir to the fortune might wish to start. Mrs. Beaumont was sensible of the truth of the observation, and offered to accompany her to church; she did not feel herself quite satisfied till Lady Beaumont had examined her son's hand-writing; having never received letters from him, it was the only way to accomplish her wish; they returned home

fatigued;

fatigued; the Baroness found herself deranged; she was scarce able to bear the perturbation it had thrown her into.

Violante perceived her agitation, and endeavoured to divert her thoughts to a less interesting subject,—it was impossible; she arose from her seat. “I am injuring your health, my dear; let us retire; I will pray for firmness, to bear the restoration of a lost hope, or to find that hope destroyed.” They separated for the night.

Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep, (as Dr. Young elegantly expresses it) wrapped them in his oblivious mantle; their nerves recovered from the shock they had sustained.

Lady Beaumont arose, calmly determined to meet the height of human happiness, or the lowest ebb of misfortunes, as a christian.

Violante was thinking of Mr. Mazirre, when the Baroness entered her apartment. Never did she look more beautiful: her eyes sparkled: there was a glow in her cheeks, a Titian might imitate, but never equal! She beheld her with attention. “Oh! that Lord Beaumont might return, and behold you with more than a mother’s fondness! Blushes of a deeper dye suffused her face and neck,—“Breakfast waits, my dear: are you ready?”

ready?" — "I am, my Lady; and am happy to find your looks are intitled to the compliments you bestowed on mine."

"Violante, a truce to flattery: let us hasten to my amiable daughter." They made a speedy breakfast, and were soon at the convent.

Mrs. Beaumont was waiting in the parlour. Seven years had elapsed since she beheld the streets of Naples: her knees trembled as she passed through the passage leading to the outer gate, like the tempest beaten mariner, who fears to venture on the foaming main, where he has suffered shipwreck! Though her absence was only for a few hours, she dreaded lest those should prove the source of fresh misfortunes.

Lady Beaumont saluted and congratulated her on the occasion of her leaving the convent, desiring she might give directions to the servant where to drive: she was under some difficulty to recollect the road. When they arrived at the church, Mrs. Beaumont sent to desire the attendance of the priest: the servant soon returned: not so the divine: the same who married them: the distance was trifling between his humble dwelling and the church: scarce a minute's walk to the young and healthy; it was a long

a long way to him; age and infirmity had unstrung his sinews; his stiffened joints were impelled forward with pain; his white hairs were thinly scattered on his temples, like a majestic edifice, which, after it has kept its dignity for ages, is forced at last to owe its support to some friendly buttress; so did the good man preserve his tottering frame from falling, by the assistance of a staff.—When he had reached the carriage, he enquired what was wanted? Mrs. Beaumont informed him. “I will give you what you require.”

They went into the church: the proof of their marriage, and the hand-writing of Mr. Beaumont was soon discovered. When she beheld the signature of her son, she dropped a tear on the page,—she looked at her daughter,—the look was contagious. The certificate obtained, Lady Beaumont offered the old gentleman a handsome present, which he declined. She desired him to dispose of it in charity: he bowed. They entered the carriage, extremely depressed, which, by degrees, dissipated.

They stopped at the convent.—Lady Beaumont prevailed on her daughter to dine with them: she alighted for an instant, to prevent the abbess being uneasy.

The

The exercise and fresh air gave her an appetite. In the evening she returned home. Fain would the Baroness have persuaded her to reside wholly with her. Politely she declined the invitation, as she had made a vow, when she entered the convent, never to sleep out of it till the return of her son.

They had a long conversation on the subject of Mr. Beaumont's passing for a merchant; they agreed in opinion, that it was done to prevent his father from hearing of his marriage.

Lady Beaumont observed, that the clergyman who acted as his tutor, proved a disgrace to the cloth; he was ever getting drunk, and at last fell a sacrifice to his darling passion; he died of a fit of intemperance at Rome. From that hour he had no one to control his actions; it was impossible to form a thought what could have given occasion to the fatal duel. The first notice his father received, was from a friend in London, who informed him of the loss of his son, and that his body was on board a vessel in the river.

The discourse turned to her grandson; she lamented lest he might never return; that if he retarded it for any length of time, her thread of life might be exhaust-

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ed, or she might have lost her reasoning faculties, and dwindle to second childhood.

Poor Mrs. Beaumont was unable to afford her any comfort; her tenderness apprehended that something dreadful had prevented her receiving any intelligence.

Violante, who had been all attention, was desirous to amuse them; she asked Lady Beaumont, if she should sing her favourite tune.—“ If my daughter approves it, it will give me pleasure.” Certainly,” said the amiable lady; “ nothing sooner harmonizes the spirits than music.” Violante sung charmingly; her voice was melodious. Lady Beaumont was all ear; her daughter all rapture; they applauded her performance.

Mrs. Beaumont said, “ My dear Lady, may I intreat you to assist me in requesting Mademoiselle to join her voice to our nuns next Wednesday, being the Feast of St. Cecilia?”

“ Daughter, if there was occasion, I would ask my lovely child to grant your desire.”

Violante, with a smile, assured them, she thought herself honoured, and would certainly attend.

Lady Beaumont, though her daughter would not leave the convent, obtain-

ed her promise to dine with her twice a week. In return, they were to pass one afternoon at the convent. They did not go out the next day till the evening, when they took a short airing. On their return, they found a card from Mrs. Beaumont, requesting their company the following afternoon, to meet the physician, whose goodness had preserved her. She sent for answer, they would gladly pay their respects to such a worthy character.

On their arriving, they found Mrs. Beaumont in the parlour, sitting by a venerable gentleman, whom she introduced as Doctor Benini: his behaviour was courteous and unassuming; he congratulated Lady Beaumont on the singular manner in which Providence had restored her hopes of an heir; from the knowledge he had of him when a youth, he was sure by this time to have become an accomplished, amiable man; though unable to excuse him for not writing to his mother, yet he made no doubt, when they had the satisfaction to hold him in their embraces, he would give such reasons as would fully exculpate his conduct.

Mrs. Beaumont mentioned to her mother, that she had omitted to inform her the name of her grandfather; it

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was Muffei, which she had assumed, soon after receiving the first letter from her son, to avoid the impertinence of visitors, and prevent their finding her place of residence. The carriages came nearly together. Lady Beaumont invited Doctor Benini and her daughter to dinner the next day, which they accepted, and promised to wait on her early.

Lady Beaumont made it a practice to send daily to the post-office; no letters of consequence had yet been received.

Early the next morning, the servant brought one directed for Mademoiselle Violante; she opened it; from Father Felix; it was a long one; she was agitated as she read.

"My dear," said the Baroness, "you are alarmed?" "Will your Ladyship read it? I can scarce comprehend the contents." It was to the following purport;—

"Father Felix had been extremely uneasy at not hearing from his dear child for a long space of time: from this state of doubt, he had been relieved by receiving her letter, dated Montpelier, acquainting him of various hardships she had gone through, and her happy introduction to Lady Beaumont: he prayed for the health and continuance of such a friend; the former letters

letters she had sent never came, nor had any one from Montpelier call'd on him. The Marquis was gone from Milan to Madrid, and it was uncertain how long he might remain there: Lord Raymond, to the surprize of his surgeons, was recovered, and a few days before had set off for England: Mr. Mazirire had written, and inclosed a letter, which he desired him to deliver to his beloved Violante; he was fearful it might miscarry, therefore he should not send it till he received her answer; he proposed shortly returning to Milan, having heard Lord Raymond was out of danger: Father Clement was hourly expected, which he was extremely glad to hear, and should make it his business to call on him as soon as possible, to discover if he could not give some information respecting the will of Mr. Le Merchant; as to the nephew, he was going on in his old path, oppressing the indigent, and defrauding the innocent: Madame Villeroy he had once accidentally met in the street; she hung down her head, and hastily passed him: he concluded, with recommending her to remember her Creator in the days of prosperity, as in the days of adversity, that remembrance would prove a comfort, when all the riches of the world will not avail."

In

In a postscript written in a hurry, he exclaims, " This instant I am told there is a gentleman enquiring after a female child, left in the hands of a priest; many years back. I will go learn if you are the object of his researches: prepare to have the result by the next post. Farewel."

When Lady Beaumont had finished the letter, she said, " My dear Violante may depend on it, her parents are before this time known to Father Felix: the discovery will be fortunate, though it may cause me to lose my darling."

" Heaven forbid, Lady! the knowledge of my birth should separate me from you! If my parents are noble, they will venerate the preserver of their child: should poverty be their lot, they must rejoice at the fortunate situation which, by your goodness I enjoy: as for other hopes, they are at present vague as the floating gossamer: your wishes I make no doubt, are for my happiness."

Lady Beaumont was about to reply, when her daughter and Doctor Benini entered. The Baroness informed them of the letter and its contents. Mrs. Beaumont felt the strongest attachment to Violante, and formed hopes, if her son returned, she would by degrees forget Mr. Mazirire, and, as they must necessarily

be often in each other's company, love, unobserved, might enter, and crown her wishes in their union. Lady Beaumont intreated her daughter not to mention a word further to Violante on the subject, it being of such a delicate nature, though it had her hearty approbation——”

“Amen,” said doctor Benini.—They were more cheerful than usual. Mrs. Beaumont discovered such a vein of lively humour, as demonstrated judgment and understanding.

The next day, being Sunday, was passed by the ladies in devotion; in which, though they differed in outward form, they united in adoring their Saviour, and in the same mutual benevolence to his creatures.

Lady Beaumont and Violante repaired early on Monday to the convent, to assist in the rehearsal of the Music that was to be performed on the Wednesday. They had, by the desire of Mrs. Beaumont, allotted to Violante the principal part, and were impatient to hear if her voice equalled the praises bestowed on it. She studied the notes for a few minutes; then turning to the abbess, said, she would take care to be perfect by the day of performance.

“My dear child, your obliging intentions merit the truest thanks: from
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the sweetness of your voice in conversation, I think it not difficult to judge of its melody." They proceeded to the gallery belonging to chapel: some of the nuns played on different instruments: two whose voices were most esteemed, sung part of the anthem with Violante: the rest occasionally joined in chorus. Violante far surpassed her competitors. The expectation which they had formed, was infinitely short of the delight she occasioned.

When the rehearsal was over, the abbess said, taking her hand, "My dear, in you are united many excellencies: modesty is your brightest jewel, and that which gives lustre to the rest." Violante made a low curtesy, and returned to the parlour. Mrs. Beaumont embraced her. The Baroness pressed her daughter to return with them, but she desired to be excused.

Next day they again attended the rehearsal: they dined and staid till the hour of vespers, promising to be early at the convent.

Violante was fatigued: the Baroness would not take her evening-airing: they retired to rest: the ensuing morning they forsook their pillows, and dressed themselves for the day. Lady Beaumont's

was

was grave: Violante's, a white muslin, ornamented with lilac ribbands: she looked simply elegant: her beautiful hair flowed loosely down her back: unconscious of charms, she charmed the more. They were soon at the convent. Violante, when the performance was to begin, left the Baroness, and went to the gallery. —The chapel was filled with genteel company: a curtain prevented the performers from being gazed at, which assisted to give confidence, and enable her to exert her voice to its utmost powers. Whilst she was singing, there was a bustle in the chapel. A gentleman fainted, supposed from the heat: he was carried into the air: all was again quiet. At the conclusion, on asking for Lady Beaumont, the abbess, told her not to be alarmed: the ladies had heard news of Lord Beaumont, which had caused them to leave the convent for a short time; they would call for her on their return: mean while she would use her endeavours to prevent that short space proving tedious.

Violante was extremely surprised at this intelligence: though pleased at hearing Lady Beaumont was likely to see her grand-son, yet the hints both had dropped, made her fearful, if Lord Beaumont has returned, and happened to approve her

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her person, they might think it ungrateful in her to refuse: yet her heart was unalterably attached: neither rank or fortune should ever occasion one wavering thought! She was lost in these ideas, when the abbess asked, if it was agreeable to take a walk in the grove. The question recalled her recollection: they found a refreshing coolness: the trees which formed a shade, consisted of oranges, myrtles, and pomegranates, whose thick foliage, intermixed with golden fruit and fragrant blossoms, kept off the scorching rays of the meridian sun, and courted the flying zephyrs. Here they remained till the summoning bell gave notice of dinner.

As the ladies were not returned, Violante dined in the refectory; at least, sat down at the table; for appetite she had none. The abbess persuaded her to lie down: sleep shed its poppies on her eye-lids, and held her in his dominion some hours: she awoke in health.

Lady Beaumont returned, and desired to be excused alighting, as she was extremely tired.

Violante politely thanked the abbess, for her attention, desiring her warmest remembrance to the sister-hood.

“My

“ My dear child, you have amply compensated for the trifling assistance we have offered, by the obligations you have laid us under: permit me, in the name of my community, to return our acknowledgments. Could you have heard half the handsome compliments bestowed on your singing, it must have convinced you how extremely sensible we ought to be of the favour! May heaven guard, protect, and claim you for its own! Farewell!”

Violante made a curtesy, and withdrew: she found Lady Beaumont in a hurry of spirits, which she endeavoured to conceal, congratulated her on having heard news of Lord Beaumont, and enquired after his mother; she then desired to learn the particulars which occasioned them to leave the convent, and where they had since been.

“ My dear, I have seen my grandson: I have held him in my arms: the express image of his father! Did you not hear a gentleman fainted in the chapel?”

“ I did, Madame.” “ That was Lord Beaumont.” “ You amaze me!” “ It is true. I was listening to your singing: every person was attentive: your voice and judgment were equally admired! My daughter, who was sitting by me, at

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once turned pale as death: her eyes fixed on a gentleman, supported in the arms of two others: they carried him into the air. I desired Mrs. Beaumont to leave the chapel. With difficulty I led her into the parlour: she had a wildness in her looks, which alarmed me. I besought her to acquaint me, if the gentleman who was carried out, was the occasion.—“*My son!*” As she pronounced the words. I felt a sensation of which I can give no adequate idea. We looked at each other: tears gave relief: she was now able to inform me, she was certain of his being her long absent child: she had observed him from the beginning of the anthem: though he was too intent to take notice of ought beside, his eyes accidentally encountered hers. He fainted. Scarce had she finished speaking, when a day-sister informed us, a gentleman in the outer parlour was extremely anxious to be admitted. “It is he!—Let me fly!” she ran to the grate, threw back the curtain, and beheld her son. “My child! my child!” He took hold of his mother’s hands, and pressed them to his lips: then falling on his knees, said, “Forgive your son: if sufferings may plaid for pardon,—I may hope for yours.”

“Speak

"Speak not of pardon : you never did offend. Where have you been? What has befallen you?"

"Dearest mother, I will inform you at more leisure."

"Do so, my darling.—Lady Beaumont, see, he is returned to me,—to you,—to happiness :—let us hasten to his arms!"

"Daughter, I will attend you; yet let me first behold his features: "It is my son!" I exclaimed,—"my Charles,—my murdered Charles!"—"What mean you, Madam? Mother, can you explain?"

"I will, dear youth :—Your father was my only child : heir to a princely fortune : he being deceased, it is yours. I will take care you shall be vested in the estates and title of Lord Beaumont."

"Am I alive!—Something I heard of fortune! title!—It cannot be,—my senses wander."

"Oh! Charles, your reason errs not.—you are indeed Lord Beaumont :—look on this noble lady, whose least worth is rank and fortune, she is your grandmother. I gave you life. From her you will receive a far greater gift,—unstained honour! Be it your care to guard it whilst you have life."

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As a statue stood the amiable youth. I held out my hand : he pressed it to his heart. " Excuse me, honoured lady,—I am unable—I am oppressed,—my heart throbs in my bosom." Mrs. Beaumont became urgent to go to him. I went with her : time will not allow me to paint the tender scene. Last night he reached this city, went to doctor Benini : the good man quickly knew and told him of his mother's residence : it was then too late to see her : he did not inform him of his birth : that tale he left to us ; we returned with him to his kind host. Uncertain hope was changed to certain joy : we were a world centered within ourselves. I tore myself from them, and came for thee.—Believe me, not dearer is my grandson than thyself : let me intreat your favour for Lord Beaumont ?—Do not answer,—your looks speak cruel words :—cast not a damp on this unclouded day : till you have seen him, steel not your heart against him : he dines with me to-morrow, accompanied by his mother and the doctor." They were now arrived at home.

Violante, whose palpitating heart caused her infinite disquiet, hoped to be released from a distressing conversation, which, probably might end in the most
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unfortunate manner if Lord Beaumont, by their persuasion, should seriously pay his addresses, nothing remained but to leave the protection of Lady Beaumont.

She daily expected to hear from Father Felix,—and would not therefore take any step unless driven by necessity; she prayed that her parents might be found, to relieve her from a state of dependency, and prevent her from appearing to act ungratefully. Lady Beaumont observed Violante was extremely depressed: she wanted to renew the subject, bestowing the warmest commendations on her grandson's elegant figure and accomplishments; rallied her attachment to Mr. Mazirire, as she could venture to prophecy, it would soon have a speedy conclusion. Indeed her grandson, if he was to hear that the lady whom his mother and grandmother had recommended as the most virtuous and charming of her sex, entertained a passion for another, was too noble to bestow a thought on such a character.

The fire of virtuous indignation sparkled in the eyes of Violante, at this unexpected treatment. "Surely," she replied, "I do not hear Lady Beaumont! The patroness of a depressed orphan, cannot entertain such unworthy sentiments;

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I never will give up my preference to that best of men, for a glittering title, or a gew-gaw fortune: if heaven ordains us again to behold each other, we shall enjoy more real happiness, than grandeur can bestow: Believe me, if Lord Beaumont speaks to me on such a subject, I will inform him of the situation of my heart: I may again be destitute; yet will I never act basely." Tears trickled down her cheeks.

"Violante, you are too impetuous: do not view my intentions in such an unfavourable light: if my grandson meets not your approbation, rest perfectly easy: I shall not again attempt to influence your choice, nor will it occasion any abatement in my affectionate regard; I esteem your principles,—I honour constant love. My wearied body and mind want sleep; the discovery which Providence has this day made, calls for the warmest acknowledgments; let us therefore join in returning due thanks for the precious pledge it has restored."

Violante embraced her; the clouds of apprehension were dispelled, by the cheering rays of returning tranquility: they adored the divine mercy, and separated for the night.

Early

Early the next morning they arose, and hailed the rising sun; that glorious luminary, through the pure æther shed his golden beams, night's murky children fled at his approach; all nature smiled, and in one general chorus proclaimed the King of day! Ruled by the King of kings, his Maker's will fulfil.

Violante looked fresh as the morn. After contemplating the beauties of the creation, they adjourned to breakfast. Lady Beaumont gave orders for a sumptuous dinner; the discovery of her grandson was not yet known. She proposed making it public, and to send her butler as soon as possible to England with the intelligence; likewise to give directions for her seat to be got ready for their reception, as she was desirous to have Lord Beaumont's title properly acknowledged and secured.

A servant brought Lady Beaumont a small shagreen case, he had found in the street: on opening it, she perceived it contained the picture of a gentleman, set round with brilliants. "Upon my word, a pretty fellow! Look, my dear."

Violante took it in her hand, let it drop. "You are alarmed: tell me the reason?" "Oh! Lady Beaumont, that picture is the portrait of Mr. Mazirire!" "In-

deed!" "Yes!" It is my faithful, my beloved friend: I will, with your permission, keep it until the owner claims it." "Certainly, if it is your desire. I must get ready to receive my heir: you will meet me in the drawing-room."

The ladies retired to their apartments. Violante, in compliment to her benefactress, put on a suit of pink silk, spotted with silver, trimmed with a silver fringe; her hair flowed loosely: some pearl pins, (a present from Lady Beaumont) were the only ornaments she wore: when she was dressed, she took up a book. A loud rap at the door put an end to her study: she sat some time, considering whether she had best go at once to the drawing-room, or stay till her company was desired: whilst she was in this undetermined state, the Baroness came. "Lord Beaumont is waiting to pay his respects: I will introduce you: what means this tremor? He is no dragon or inchanter: lean on my arm."—Her knees tottered: she could scarcely, with the assistance of the Baroness, walk to the drawing-room.

"Exert your fortitude, and prepare to receive my grand-son as a favourite lover."

Had

Had her strength been equal to her wishes, she would instantly have left the house.

Lady Beaumont opened the door. "Behold, Lord Beaumont, the wife I have allotted you."

Hastily he turned! Violante fainted in the arms of his grandmother. Quick as a lion rushes on his prey, did he seize the insensible fair one, pressing her to his bosom, and recalling her to life, in the tenderest words. Her lips regained their ruby colour; her eyes once more admitted day; she beheld her Mazirire!—who, transported, called her "his adorable angel," and vowed no more to be separated; besought her to restore him to perfect happiness, by hearing her harmonious voice.—After some struggles, she pronounced "Mazirire!" Then looking round, said, "Where is Lord Beaumont?"

He replied, "my name is Beaumont: the man I trust, of your affections, which I would not exchange for all the wealth of rich Potoli's mines! Look not so fearful: I am indeed thy fond, thy faithful, and adoring lover!"

"My dear," said his grandmother, "we learnt the name he had of late assumed was Mazirire; and too our com

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fort was soon convinced he loved you : a thought then struck my fancy, to introduce you to each other, as a predestinated couple : his mother spoke to him as I to you : he like a tiger caught in toils, disdained our offered bride : scarce could he be prevailed on once to behold her : vowed never to see her more. We consented, with apparent reluctance. He assured us, it would occasion him infinite pain, to be under the necessity of telling a lady, his heart was pre-engaged : that it would be infinitely more delicate to acquaint her of this circumstance ourselves, than force the disagreeable task on him.

He came to behold, disdain, and refuse the lady of our appointment.

“ Indeed,” said Mrs. Beaumont, “ had you seen the sullen airs my son gave himself, this morning, you would have acted properly to treat his present transport with indifference. You are gentle and forgiving ; then make him happy.”

She took one of her hands. “ My son, receive from me your beloved Violante : may you long enjoy the felicity your faithful loves merit : and may I live to behold your offspring !”

“ Heaven grant it !” said Lady Beaumont,

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mont, "if not—his will be done. I must return to England. Lord Beaumont, you Madame, and you my love, will favour me with your company. When I have properly secured his title and estates, I shall devote the remainder of my days to meditation and prayer."

Lord Beaumont thanked his mother and the Baroness for their inestimable gift.

Violante's handkerchief concealed tears of sensibility that streamed from her eyes.

Lord Beaumont again pressed her to his heart, whilst the ladies, in most endearing terms, soothed the perturbations themselves had occasioned.

Lady Beaumont mentioned to her grandson the probability of Violante's soon discovering who were her parents. He looked grave at the information. "My dear Lady, I wish our nuptials could be first celebrated. I fear even shadows."

• Violante gave him a look which might be construed faith, truth, and love: then with a sweet timidity, said, "her every wish centered in him and his kind parents:" they had all acquired tolerable composure,—when dinner was announced.

Lord Beaumont at the desire of his grandmother, took his place at the bottom

tom of the table, as she said her heir ought to do. The servants looked: the old butler gazed on him, with astonishment: his Mistress took notice of it, and enquired the cause. "Oh! my Lady, my young master is once more before me: his very effigy!" Lord Beaumont took hold of his hand. "My good friend, if I resemble my noble father in his outward form, I will study to do honour to his name: you shall find me his representative."

"Now shall I die happy," said the faithful creature: Beaumont-castle shall still have a master, and the poor a generous benefactor.—Your father, my Lord, —, I must be silent." He wiped the tears from his furrowed cheeks, and resumed his place at the side-board.

Lady Beaumont was affected by the sensibility of Martin. Her grandson said every thing to animate and enliven the conversation. Youth, health, love, honour, and riches surrounded and yielded themselves to his possession: his heart was filled with philanthropy: he amused them by the liveliest sallies of wit; he entertained them with droll occurrences: they caught the social flame. How different was their language to that too often heard at the tables of opulence,

where pert levity passes for wit, and is approved of by the flanty woman of quality, who looks on obscure merit and poverty, as the blackest crimes in the decalogue. Let not a thought rest on such gilded reptiles. Behold a queen, who, whilst she adds dignity to grace, is more ornamented by virtues, than the addition of the richest diadem.

In the evening, Lady Beaumont proposed going to the opera: a card was dispatched to acquaint Doctor Benini of their intentions: he had been prevented coming, and might be alarmed by their staying so late.

All the servants who had attended their Lady from England, were ordered to appear. When they were assembled, she told them of the marriage of her son, and the birth of her grandson, who, by a concurrence of events was, till she reached Naples, totally unknown to her: that she should soon return home. "You, Martin, shall immediately go to acquaint my chaplain and tenants with the joyful news, and prepare for our reception. Lord Beaumont will likewise give you some letters, relative to the estates and leases." Martin thanked his lady for the honour, in chusing him to be the bearer of such blessed news, which he would
take

take care to make as public as possible; and whatever orders his noble master intrusted to.—Lord Beaumont thanked him, and promised to be his friend. “ I don’t doubt,” sobbed the old man. The rest behaved with decorum, though their joy was fully discernable. They were all noticed in the kindest and most affable manner. Their lady promised a day of jubilee on their return to the castle. Their lord gave them a handsome gratuity. They retired, praying for his health.

Shortly after they went to the opera. Violante, to a beautiful form, added the most graceful and becoming dress: she was the object of universal admiration.

Lord Beaumont, pleased to observe the goddess of his heart attract the eyes of the company, entertained her with the utmost vivacity. She listened with delight; she had recovered her smiles. Never could there be a happier party! His mother was to return to the friendly physician: they alighted for a few minutes: a cold collation was ready. The Baroness would not let her daughter depart without some refreshment. Whilst they were partaking of it, one of the footmen acquainted Violante, that a middle-aged gentleman had come, soon after they were gone, and made very particular

ticular enquiries after her ; that he desired she would not be from home the next morning, as his business was of the most important consequence.

“ Heavens !” said Lord Beaumont, “ who can this stranger be !” “ Can you not guess ?” said her ladyship : depend on it, it is Violante’s father, or some friend of his.” She changed colour, trembled ! Should it be her father, he might disown, or prove her of such mean extraction, as would throw a blemish on the family she was going be allied to.

Her lover besought she would not alarm her spirits : if it was a parent who was to be made happy, by finding his long forsaken child restored an angel, she could have no apprehensions : if it was only a person to gain information, that was of no moment : at least, if she wished not to make him wretched, he requested her to dispel the gloom that oppressed her, and, by her smiles, gladden his heart.

To oblige him, she assumed a cheerfulness. They parted in tolerable spirits. She endeavoured to compose herself to rest : a thousand thoughts rushed on her recollection ; she was inexpressibly delighted with the discovery that had taken place ; yet felt strong fears of the visitor that

that was coming in the morning.—Sleep kindly seized her: she forgot each anxious doubt: it was late ere she awoke.

Lady Beaumont finding her lovely friend was yet in bed, entered the apartment. She started! “My dear, it is late: I hope your dreams have proved pleasant.”

Violante blushed. “I am quite angry with myself for having been such a sluggard, and shall be ready to attend you in a few minutes.”

“Do not hurry yourself: I am not in haste.”——Violante used expedition, and soon followed Lady Beaumont to her dressing room, where they breakfasted: they had not concluded, when Violante was informed the gentleman was below, who called the preceding evening: her heart palpitated; she could scarce pronounce, “I will attend him;” then looked at the baroness, as if she wished her to be present at the interview.

“My dear,” said the lady, “my presence would be improper; if you wish me to come, I will, on your sending to me: be not alarmed; you have been guilty of no crime. Fear belongs only to offenders. Do not keep the gentleman waiting: he may perhaps form some unfavourable opinion of it.”

This

This idea of Lady Beaumont's forcibly struck Violante's imagination; with trembling haste she went to the room: a servant opened the door; the stranger was near it. After a moment, he caught her in his arms; tears streaming from his eyes. "My child! my Violante! Heaven, in its infinite mercy, has restored you to my arms! I am, I am thy father, who, though obliged to part with thee for a short time, as I then intended, yet never formed a thought to abandon thy helpless infancy! A most dreadful misfortune occasioned you to remain so long neglected!—I am now come to remove you from dependance to opulence, from obscurity to rank!—My child, your mother is renewed in you; never was there a more perfect image of a departed angel." His voice was broken, with the agony of his soul.

She threw herself at his feet.—"My dearest father, if I resemble a beloved mother, let me beseech you to moderate your grief. I will endeavour to prove worthy of your affection, by the most dutiful attention."

He pressed her to his bosom:—"It is too much! The very music of her voice——!" He changed colour: his head reclined on her shoulders; she call-

ed for assistance ; servants came with water ; he sipped a little, and became more calm. Lady Beaumont expressed the warmest solicitude for his recovery ; she told him, “ in his daughter he would possess a treasure, kings might envy—angels approve ; that from the hour of becoming acquainted with Violante to that time, she had found occasion of fresh esteem, of stronger attachment ; she indeed loved her like a mother, and hoped to cement their families, by a marriage between his daughter and her grandson.”

He looked at Violante whilst she was speaking. “ What says my darling ? ”

“ My duty to you, Sir, must direct my answer. I own, I prefer the grandson of that worthy lady, to the most exalted monarch. You will, I trust, approve him equally. As to my noble benefactress, I am unable to inform you of the obligations she has laid me under. I was nearly starving, totally wretched, when she took me under her hospitable roof ; a fever followed ; parental tenderness once more preserved your daughter’s life ; she has daily loaded me with benefits ; my heart is too full of gratitude to expatiate on them.”

Lady Beaumont took her in her arms :
 “ Hush, Violante,—I shall be angry,
 —I have

—I have only acted as I ought.”

“ I find,” said her father, “ my wishes will prove abortive ! ”

“ What mean you, Sir ? ”

“ I meant, my child, to have given your hand to a most deserving man ; he cannot boast of nobility, yet possesses a rectitude of conduct that gives lustre to his name.”

“ Oh ! father ! ” clasping his hands together, “ how will thy placid spirit bear the shock ! Woman, woman ! ” His words astonished his daughter ; she was unable to reply.

Lady Beaumont, however, who felt piqued, assured him, her grandson possessed virtues equal to most young men ; she intreated the honour of his company at dinner, when he would see Lord Beaumont ; that if their union did not then entirely meet his approbation, she should herself be equally desirous to prevent it.”

“ I accept your ladyship’s invitation, and will then fully explain myself, and inform my daughter who the gentleman is, I wished her to marry. Excuse me from paying a longer visit at this time.” Then making a low bow to the Baroness, took his leave.

Lady

Lady Beaumont congratulated her young friend on discovering her father, and at finding he was a person of rank and fortune. "At present, my dear, I shall not distress you, by taking notice of what he said; a few hours will bring on a final explanation, I hope to all our wishes. You will dress yourself directly, as my daughter has promised to come early." She left her, to give orders to her domestics not to admit visitors that evening.

Violante, like a flower, reclined her head; she scarcely heard what Lady Beaumont said; she fetched deep sighs; she was wrapped in sorrow. Lord Beaumont entered; she heard him not; he threw himself at her feet. "What, most beloved of women! occasions this? Cannot your Beaumont afford consolation? Speak, my charmer! My soul is eager to give you proof of my regard." Softened as she was, his words made a deep impression: she suffered him to kiss her cheeks, her eyes, her lips! He thought he felt the gentle pressure of hers. His eyes flashed fire; he breathed short; his transports bordered on madness; the appearance of his mother recalled his recollection. In confusion he arose to receive her.

"I am

" I am anxious, Madame, I found Violante in deep distress, and was soliciting for information when you came."

" Indeed, son," said the arch lady, " I think you could not well gain it, whilst you prevented her from speaking. " A conscious blush vouched the truth of the remark.

Violante, unable to speak, took hold of Mrs. Beaumont's hand, and held it to her lips. " It is not my son's," said she, smiling; yet be assured, if any thing has given you trouble, I shall suffer."

Restored by these kind words, she was able to give a detail of all that had passed with her father: concluding, with his invitation to dinner, and that he would then inform them of his determination.

Lord Beaumont was hurt and alarmed: his mother said every thing that a good heart could offer to comfort them; she told them, it was evident her father meant this as the only effort he should make; that it required nothing but prudence on her son's part to ensure success.

" Dear mother, that you may depend on."

" Ah!" said Violante, " my father expects obedience:—true love!—but a parent will scarce act the part of a tyrant. I think it a crime even to suppose it."

" Dry

“ Dry your eyes ; let him behold you smile : he will not, I am confident, wish to crush your dawning happiness.”

How delightfully does hope offer consolation ! it sheds its pleasing illusions on all ranks and ages, cheers the gloom of a prison, and softens the labours of the wretch chained to the oar ! Never did it look more gay than now !

Violante left them, to inform Lady Beaumont of their arrival.

Mrs. Beaumont besought her son to be on his guard. “ The calm man,” she added, “ has such an advantage over the outrageous one. I am astonished patience is not more inculcated ; it is an error of the age, and young men more particularly think that violent words shew a courageous disposition ; that is, indeed, an imposition on the understanding ; the most resolute are generally the last to give offence : like deep rivers, they pursue a steady course, whilst the brawling brook, dashing against every pebble, would fain assume an importance it can never attain.”

He assented to what she had been saying, and promised to govern himself, however greatly his feelings might be hurt.

Lady Beaumont joined them ; the cloud dissipated from her countenance.

After

After the usual salutations, she informed them of the visitor they were to meet. Before they could reply, he was announced as the "Marquis d'Agular:" he was dressed magnificently; yet had a grandeur in his person, and a grace in his manner, superior to every other distinction; he bowed low, yet with dignity, to Lady Beaumont; she introduced him to her daughter, then to Lord Beaumont.

"Your heir, Lady Beaumont, will, if his looks are the index of his mind, do you honour; no wonder my daughter felt their influence; but sure, she has done wrong! Excuse me, my Lord; yourself shall be judge of her conduct. After dinner, I will clear your doubts."

They looked on each other. Lady Beaumont ordered a servant to acquaint Violante her company was wanted; she came directly. Virtue, love, and respect, beamed in her eyes. Lowly she bent to her father; then gave a transient look at Lord Beaumont; yet that look said every thing, and was returned by one equally explicit; her parent held her in his arms, gave her his blessing, and thanked her benefactress repeatedly for her goodness. "My child," said the Marquis, "we must ever be unable to make a return

turned suitable to the benefits that you have experienced ; yet let us express our thanks in the fullest manner we are able.

“ I have brought you a trifle ; it belonged to your grandmother ; therefore I esteem it.”

The trifle was a pair of rich diamond ear-rings and necklace, together with a picture, set round with large brilliants. It was easy to discern it was the portrait of the marquis, drawn when he was many years younger. She returned proper acknowledgments for so valuable a present ; assuring him she esteemed his picture infinitely the most.

They sat down to a sumptuous repast, where taste combined with splendour. Afterwards there was an elegant dessert, accompanied with the choicest and most delicious wines. Lord Beaumont behaved with great respect and attention. The Marquis seemed extremely delighted with his conversation, and drew him in to give his opinion on various subjects.

Violante observed this with satisfaction, though she dreaded what he had to say. He began his narrative in these words:—

“ I am a subject of the king of Spain. Your mother was descended from one of
 3 the

first families of Milan. Various causes had conspired to deprive her of fortune. I was on my travels, attended by a rigid preceptor when I, by accident, met her, at a relation's, who treated her with cold civility. She was in the bloom of youth; when I assure you, I behold in my daughter her perfect resemblance, I need not say more of her person. I felt myself attached in the most irresistible manner. I insisted on seeing her home. She earnestly refused my offer. I would take no denial. She resided not far from her relation's, in an obscure part of the town, and the habitation was mean. I requested permission to enquire after her health; and, before she had time to refuse, I left her.

“ My preceptor was that evening engaged with some old college acquaintance he had met at Milan.

“ A day or two afterwards, I had an opportunity of leaving him, and flew to the house of my charmer.—I knocked at the door. A decrepid female opened it. “ Is your young lady at home?”

“ Alas!” said the old woman, “ I have now no other; they are all gone! all at peace!” Her hand passed over her eyes; as she withdrew it, it was wet; she was thinking on days long past.

“ Worthy

“ Worthy woman, I esteem your affection :—pray resolve me,—is your lady at home ? Can I speak with her ? ”

She looked doubting, then said, “ Sure you mean no insult,—follow me.” She ascended a stair-case, in need of great repair ; led me through two rooms without furniture, save the embroidery of busy spiders ; then opening a door, told me that was her lady’s apartment, and left me.

“ Your mother, who you was named after, was sitting reading : her work was on the table ; her back to the door ; she did not instantly see who it was ; when she did, she started, and seemed displeased. I besought her to hear me, and declared my passion. With sweet modesty she heard, desired me not to act rashly : she would not disgrace her family, nor must I mine.—I had not a wish of possessing her but by a marriage ; that I knew my father would never consent to. She gave me permission to come again : I tore myself from her. My passion made me wretched. I lost the sense of every pleasure but that of seeing her. Love is ingenuous. I found means to visit my charmer. I offered her my hand, desiring she would for the present, keep it secret, for fear my preceptor should inform my father.

“ It

“ It was not till after many visits she consented : we were united at a neighbouring church : I made use only of my name ; my title was not needful.

“ I was now happy in the possession of my angel. I used to leave my lodgings after my preceptor was gone to bed, and return before he arose. My servant thought I was fond of a lady ; not strictly virtuous. I did not undeceive him.

“ Some months rolled on, when my father wrote to me to hasten home, as he wished to marry me to the daughter of a grandee ; that every thing was settled.

“ It was a dreadful shock. I was glad, however, to find he had wrote no other letter. I told my tutor my father wished me to remain at Milan.

“ My beloved wife was big with child : I determined neither to leave her, nor inform her of the letter, till she was recovered from her laying in.

“ I could not prevail on her to have any other attendant than the old woman. She promised me, on finding herself seized with the pains of child-birth, to send for a skilful midwife, and careful nurse.

“ I had one evening been detained in a large party ; fearing to disturb her, I went to bed at my own lodgings. It was late ere I awoke. I felt very unhappy at
having

having slept from her. Soon as breakfast was over, I flew to her house. In vain I knocked. No one appeared!—Alarmed at the circumstance, I pushed with all my strength against the door: it gave way; I rushed in. What a sight! It is yet fresh in my memory;—I must be brief, or shall not have spirits to support the melancholy detail.—At the bottom of the stairs lay the old servant; I lifted her up: she had, I found, broken her neck; my fears increased; on approaching the chamber of my wife, I heard the cry of a child! softly I opened the door: stepping gently to the bed's-foot, I beheld an angel, (such she was now truly become) bereft of life! close to her side an infant, which was crying piteously! What I did or said, can never bear repetition. The condition of the child roused me. I caught it in my arms, wrapping it up as well as I was able, and instantly hurried out. As I was running with it under my cloak, I met Father Felix; his countenance was full of mercy. I addressed myself to him, gave him the infant, desired she might be christened Violante, promised to meet him on such a day, then hastened back to the dismal scene I had come from. Scarce had I proceeded fifty yards, before I fell senseless on the earth. A crowd gathered: they

they found by some letters who I was and carried me home : it was many hours before my senses returned ; strong shiverings succeeded, and a violent fever followed. A month I passed in this state. By slow degrees I gave hopes of recovery.

“ My father sent expresses continually to enquire after me, and ordered me, as soon as I was able, to be brought in a litter to Genoa ; then by sea to Barcelona, where his carriage should attend. I was informed of it only the day prior to my removal. To see my child was impossible. I knew not the priest I had given her to, and was unable to make any enquiries. I resolved to return as soon as my strength was sufficiently regained ; and made no doubt of finding the object of my wishes.

“ By easy stages I reached Genoa, had a good passage to Barcelona, and arrived at Madrid greatly emaciated.

“ My father did every thing in his power to amuse me ; it was in vain ; the only thing that gave me satisfaction was, hearing from him that the lady he had destined me for, had declared a prior attachment ; that her parents who doated on her, had given their consent apologizing to him for breaking the engagement ; and that she was now on the point of being united to the object of her wish-

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es. As my Melancholy seemed deeply rooted, he concluded love was the cause, and that the lady remained at Milan. When this had once got into his head, he was eager to remove me still farther from that spot. To effect it, he applied to the principal minister, who was in his intimate friend, told him his apprehensions, and solicited his interest with his Majesty, to procure me an appointment in Mexico. This was easily granted.

“ Next morning I was carried to court, to return thanks, and take my leave. Then to the minister’s levee, who wished me health to enjoy the honour I was going to possess. This business was managed with such dexterity, I had no opportunity of avoiding to accept it.

“ My father accompanied me to Ferroll, where he saw me embark; nor would he leave the port, till the vessel sailed.

“ I arrived safe at Acapulca, and a few weeks after, took possession of my appointment in the city of Mexico. It was a lucrative one. I trust I was not avaricious. My conduct was so well approved, as to occasion me a longer continuance than I desired. At length, I had leave to return.

“ On

“ On my arrival at Madrid, I found my father had been dead some months, and left me his whole fortune. I settled his affairs, which were soon done, took my leave of the court, and, under pretence of wanting change of air, set out for Milan.

“ As I drew nearer it, every fond remembrance returned; I dreaded to learn what had been the fate of my child! Was the priest living to whom I had given her in charge? Yet he might be removed to a distant place, which would render my search fruitless.—Full of these ideas I entered the town.

“ I caused a proclamation to be read in many parts of the city, describing the infant, and every other particular; offering a large reward to those who should lead me to a discovery.

“ At the close of the second evening, musing on the trifling hopes I could flatter myself with, of learning news of my daughter, I was told a lady wished to speak with me. I ordered her to be shewn up. My heart fluttered with anxious apprehensions. On enquiring what had occasioned the honour of her visit, she informed me that, having heard the proclamation, she believed she could inform me of some things that would give me great satisfaction.

“ I told

" I told her, I would give her double what I had already offered, if she made the discovery; and that my remembrance of it would not stop there.

" She said, I might alter my mind; that I must give it under my hand, that I would give her such a sum, as soon as I was satisfied I had discovered the young lady.

" This I directly did, and claimed her information.

" She replied, " Go to the convent of C——, enquire for Father Felix: he it is to whom the infant was delivered."

" I called her the best of women, and if I found My daughter, should look on her as her preserver. I observed she coloured, looked down, and shewed an inclination to depart; said it might not suit her to come again; she should send for the reward in a few days, as she was certain I should then be fully informed. Making a low curtesy, she left me.

" I immediately went to the convent: on asking for Father Felix, he was not at home. One of the Fathers said he would soon return. I told him my business, and that I would be there early the next morning; which I was whilst mass was performing.

I dis.

I distinguished Father Felix, at least it proved to be him ; when the service was over, I was conducted to his cell : he looked at me with attention, and besought me to explain my wishes. " Father, where is the child I left in your arms ? I am come to claim her, and return my warmest acknowledgments." I told him what I have now related. When I had finished, he acquainted me with all that had befallen you ; concluding with your being at that time at Naples. To hear what you had gone through, pierced my heart. That hour I determined giving you in marriage. I told Father Felix my intent : he highly approved it.

" Father Felix approve !" said Lord Beaumont.

Violante uttered a soft sigh ; her father looked grave.

" Who is the happy man ?" with eagerness asked Lord Beaumont.

" My daughter can best resolve that question, unless she has forgot the name of MAZIRINE !."

Like electricity, the name was instantly repeated by every one.—Violante, whose gentle soul was almost annihilated with apprehension blushed with joy : her admirer felt a suffusion of colour ; his cheeks glowed ; his eyes spoke transport.

Lady

Lady Beaumont's countenance expressed a pleasing surprise, mixed with admiration. Mrs. Beaumont, with joy sparkling in her eyes, by fixing them on a crucifix, shewed on what she depended for lasting happiness, yet was truly thankful for that now bestowed, and prayed for a continuance of it.

The Marquis was astonished at the effect the mention of the name had occasioned: he spoke his desire of knowing the meaning of it.

"Lady Beaumont was the speaker;—
 "My Lord, that the name of MAZIRIRE has surprised us, will not appear wonderful, when I inform you, that gentleman and Mr. Mazirire are one: it is only a few days since he became acquainted with his rank and family; at your leisure I will inform you of some remarkable events: the hand of Providence has supported us through many trials, to crown our latter days with comfort, finding virtuous heirs lineally descending from us; may they prove lasting in their love, and live to see their descendants like themselves, good and fortunate!

The Marquis, whose passions had suffered extremely, by the detail of his melancholy story, could not stop a torrent of tears; he took the hand of his daughter,

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which

which he presented to her lover ;—"Here, my Lord, is your reward ; I intended her for Mr. Mazirire, who assisted and suffered for her sake. Your person and address made me repent my promise. To find you are that worthy man, gives me unspeakable satisfaction. You will receive with her a fortune equal to your utmost expectation, and at my death, she will be my heir."

Violante, in broken sentences, expressed dutiful acknowledgments.

The purest delight mortality can bestow, was now possessed by this virtuous couple. The difficulties they had gone through, were remembered only to give them more exquisite transports. Congratulations flowed from every one.

After they were a little recovered, Lady Beaumont intreated the Marquis to accompany them to England.—"You, daughter," addressing herself to Mrs. Beaumont, "will not refuse me."

"I will attend your Ladyship," replied the Marquis, "if you will take Milan in your route. I gave my word to Father Felix I would return, and that he should unite My daughter to Mr. Mazirire." To this the Baroness consented.

Mrs. Beaumont said, she should with pleasure accompany them to England, to behold

behold the feat where her son was to reside, and visit the ashes of her husband:—that done she would return to the convent, which she had so lately quitted, and pass the remainder of her life in prayers for her children.

The conversation was now interrupted by a sigh from the Baronefs.—Violante ran to her: “I fear, dear Lady, you are not well.”

"I am—but—but——"

“What?—Will you inform me?”

“ I was thinking how strange it will appear to my chaplain and dependants, to find a different form of religion take place!—Do not interrupt me,—it is a subject I shall not again speak on. I know you are no bigots ;—in essentials we agree. Universal benevolence and dependance on the deity, are the support of our belief. All I desire is, to be careful your confessor is a person of equal charity. I neither require or wish you to change your faith. We are all, I trust, to be forgiven our errors.”

This discourse gave a momentary gloom to their countenances.

The Baroness, to disperse it, began to enter into the particulars of their journey: she proposed setting out in a few days.

Lord Beaumont, with impatience,
M² asked,

asked, if they might not embark the next morning?

"That is impossible; neither Lady Beaumont, the Marquis, or myself, can have settled our affairs by that time. If you will order a ship to be got ready to receive us early in the next week, we will endeavour to meet your wishes."

"Mother, you are very indulgent." He spoke this with a smile.—It was proposed to send for Doctor Benini, as he would feel the sincerest pleasure, at hearing of this addition of happiness.

Lord Beaumont offered himself as the messenger. Their looks spoke assent. He found the Doctor at home, and prevailed on him to make one of the party.

Lord Beaumont told him what had passed: he clasped his hands! "This is, indeed, an interference of Providence! Be grateful for its mercies; yet, set not your thoughts on a long continuance of such unmixed delights. Fortune is ever varying. We should be humble in prosperity, not abject in adversity." They were now arrived at Lady Beaumont's

Violante offered to take hold of his hand: he pressed one of her's to his lips.

"That must not be," said the Marquis.

"If I have done wrong, I am sorry," answered the Doctor.

"You

You have, Sir : I hoped you loved her as a child, and would have embraced her as such."

"That I will, gladly," pressing her to his worthy bosom. You are indeed, an angel both in mind and body : may the Almighty bless you !"

He was invited to go with them to England ; but declined it on account of his age : said, his best wishes and prayers would be ever with them. It was late. They separated. Next day was to be passed at the doctor's.

Violante and Lord Beaumont enjoyed uninterrupted repose. Doubt had given way to certainty, suspense no longer embittering their loves : their spirits had been highly agitated : their bodies required sleep : they met early.

To repeat conversation such as theirs, would be tedious : true lovers can imagine it : the fickle and inconstant know nothing of its delights : they dined with the Doctor as they promised.

A few days after they embarked : the wind was fair, and soon carried them into the port of Genoa : they staid there only a short time : after a pleasant journey they entered Milan.

As soon as the ladies were provided with apartments, the Marquis, accompanied

nied by Lord Beaumont went to the convent where Father Felix resided, and found an opportunity to address him. His astonishment was extreme on the Marquis's saying he must excuse him from giving his daughter to Mr. Mazirire! He had found her so much superior to his most sanguine expectations, that he could not think of marrying her to a plebeian; and that gentleman agreed in the same opinion."

"Indeed!" said the holy Father. "What says Violante?"

"She perfectly approves my intention," he replied.

"I have been deceived in their characters!" He looked vexed. "Patience good heaven!"

He was turning from them, when Lord Beaumont caught hold of his hand. —"Stop, Father: no longer can I see you entertain the opinion of me that I perceive has taken possession you. I was Mazirire: at least, you thought that was my name, though my real one was Beaumont. I lost my father ere I saw the light: by a chain of circumstances, I have discovered that I inherit both fortune and rank. This clears up all the Marquis has told you. Violante and myself are equally happy."

Father

Father Felix looked at both : divine transport radiated his visage. " Why, this, my son, is well. Heaven that brings light out of darkness has turned your sorrow into light : and in good time punishes sinners. The vile Le Merchant has paid the debt of nature."

" What, Father ! already has he resigned his ill-gotten wealth ?"

" Even so, my son. Some ten weeks past Father Clement returned home : he called on me : I told him all that had passed : he wept at the treatment of Violante. He knew every particular of the will, which was deposited in the fatal cabinet as you apprehended : that he would if possible, see her righted, though he feared his interference would be useless. What passed between them, he has not chosen to repeat : however, it had such an effect, that he became melancholy, and dared not look at any one : he thought himself the scorn of man. This at last, ended in a dreadful catastrophe : no longer able to bear reflection, he put a period to his existence. He was discovered hanging to the foot of his bed. Dying without a will, his fortune becomes the property of the man he attempted to ruin, who was a distant relation." They felt compassion for his soul, and gave a handsome sum for masses towards its repose. Father Felix praised their piety.

" Have

“Have you, Father, heard lately from Madame Villeroy?”

“I have: I sent her, as you desired, the draught on your banker. Some time after, she desired me to confess her: she was very penitent, and discovered scenes of riot and debauchery that shocked me: she cried bitterly: said, her only comfort was the escape of your daughter: that Lord Raymond was likely to feel for a long time the wounds he had received: she had heard since his return to England, that he freely forgave the person from whom he received the punishment; and if he should recover, would new-model his life. As to her part, she would immediately set about amending her's, and asked my advice how to proceed. She has followed my counsel, and is now in a course of mortification, which I trust will effect in her a thorough abhorrence of her evil ways.”

“One more question, Father,—“Is what I ordered done?”

“Nearly: a few days will complete it.”

“Father, you will pay Violante a visit: she longs to see you.

“I will, my Lord, this afternoon: she is the child of my soul!” Tears trickled down his reverend cheeks.

For

For a few moments, they were silent. The Marquis told Father Felix he was come to claim his promise of marrying Violante.

“With pleasure shall I obey your commands: such couples are seldom joined in wedlock!”

On returning to the ladies, they diverted them with the anger of Father Felix. Lord Beaumont informed Violante of the fate of Le Merchant. A tear fell on the hand he had hold of; he kissed it.—How precious are the tears of sensibility!

After dinner, the good Father came, and was by the Marquis introduced to Lady Beaumont and her daughter: his aspect was divine: his address gentle: meekness had chosen his heart for her residence; yet the gentleman was to be distinguished under this humble garb.

He bowed low, crossing himself at the same time. After paying them his respects, he turned to Violante:—“My child, heaven has heard my prayers: you will now reap the reward of your piety.” She asked his benediction. He gave it her in the most fervent words. The Marquis was affected. “What thanks are owing, best of men! your reward is preparing in the regions of immortality.”

“Forbear

“ Forbear, my Lord, nor make me blush at praises for a bare act of humanity. A savage would have done the same.”

He desired to know if the day, was fixed for the wedding.

“ No, Father : let it now be settled.”

The Marquis approved of what Lord Beaumont said ; and asked the Baroness when it would suit her : his daughter’s fortune was ready. Fifty thousand pistoles lay for that purpose at his banker’s at Milan. It was a trifling proportion of what she would have ; yet he trusted that was sufficient to prevent any delay.

Lord Beaumont bowed : “ Did not your Lordship well know, my sentiments respecting your lovely daughter, I should fear you had perceived in me some traits of an avaricious disposition : I can only assure you of my warmest gratitude and affection. Will this Lady permit me to appoint next monday as the day on which she will make happy the man who adores her ?”

Violante, unable to look up, made a slight inclination of her head :—“ Now, my dear, you have made us all happy. My grandson will look on your obliging compliance with his wishes, as a proof of your love.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Beaumont, who pitied her delicacy, taking her by the hand, motioned to leave the room: she retired with such modest diffidence as gave the Marquis, her lover, and the pious father, equal delight: before her return, the good man had taken his leave.

Their discourse turned on the manners, amusements, and government of Milan. Violante was mistress of every particular, and by degrees resumed her usual vivacity.

A letter was delivered to Mrs. Beaumont.—“ From Doctor Benini, I perceive,”—changing colour as she read it. Her son asked if the letter informed her of any unpleasing news. She put it into his hand.—“ Shall I read it aloud?” “ Yes, my dear.”

The doctor desired her to guard her passions, as he must relate something which might highly affect them: he then informed her, that he had been sent to visit a person ill of a fever: he was a gentleman, about fifty years of age: finding him in great danger, though perfectly sensible, I recommended sending for a confessor: he was startled: —“ Shall I not recover, Doctor?” “ That is known only to the Almighty: it is right to be ready either to live or resign our breath; my duty to heaven makes me desire you
to

to relieve your mind." He sighed. I went again the next morning: his confessor was with him: he sent to enquire if I was come; hearing I was, desired my company. On approaching his bed, he addressed me in a low voice, and thanked me for my attention:—

"I am going, Doctor, to give you an account of one circumstance of my life, which you may make what use of you please;—it is now upwards of twenty years since I formed a friendship with an English gentleman: I was at that time in love with a beautiful girl; she was poor; I thought her virtuous, nor did I attempt to divert her steps from the paths of purity.

"One morning, at an early hour, I passed her door: I heard it open; a man came out! I drew my sword, intending to sacrifice him to my wrath; the false wretch caught hold of me; she besought me to hear her, nor suffer myself to act the part of an assassin. Tell me then without hesitation, the name of that man?" She seemed loth to make him known. I swore I would murder her, if she did not inform me.—"If you will force it from me, it was Beaumont."

"What, my friend! It is well. Woman, be gone; I will never see you more."

more." I flung with indignation away.

"On my return home, I sent him a challenge, insisting on his meeting me at such an hour and place, or I would declare him the vilest of scoundrels. He met me, so little conscious of guilt or fear, as not to bring a friend with him. He asked what he had done to make me act so like a madman. I was incapable of hearing reason, and insisted on his trying his skill; if he would not defend himself, I should not stay. He was angry. "I will then satisfy you." We took our distance, and fired at one time: his did me no injury; mine went through his heart. Anger gave place to remorse; I had him carried to his lodgings, and saw his remains put on board a vessel, the captain of which owed me great obligations: he sailed directly for England. I knew the name of his agent; to him I consigned the body, as I heard him often say, if he died in Naples, he desired to have his remains sent to the care of that person. I sent a short account of his falling in a duel; and the affair was soon forgotten.

"About a year afterwards, I was accosted by a miserable female, who called me by my name, and asked me for a trifle, as she was almost starved. I looked at her. "Have you no recollection of the
unfor-

unfortunate girl you was once so fond of?"—"What! are you Julia?" "I am. Since that hour you discovered my falsehood, and I, to screen my guilty partner, named your friend, I have been sinking still deeper in misery."

"Say again it was not Beaumont, and make me wretched!"

"On my soul, it was not: by chance I named him. No evil has, I hope, ensued."

"I answered her *not*. I gave her my purse: she blessed me as I hastily left her.—My life has since been a burthen to me. I have suffered long and hope for pardon. I have now unburthened myself, and in a short time my soul shall quit this sinful body. I have double cause of thankfulness; first, for the years I have had to repent, and now for that resignation, which gives me unspeakable comfort."

I felt his pulse. "I am going."—"You may, Sir, recover, though it is scarcely to be expected: you are in so pious a state of mind, as divests death of all its terrors."—"Doctor, is it not yet over?—Farewel. I am sleepy." He sunk into a slumber which did not leave him till the next day, when he resigned his breath, with scarce a struggle or sigh."

The

The letter affected Lady Beaumont and his mother : they were in deep distress ; he comforted them, though scarce master of his grief.

The Marquis sighed ; memory recalled the days that were fled ; yet he suffered not his sensations to appear. By the wisdom and eloquence of his discourse, the cloud that obscured their felicity, gradually retired. When the hour of rest approached, they humbly adored the Disposer of good, who, though he had chastised, yet in his mercy, had amply rewarded their sufferings ; the spirit of peace attended on their slumbers ; they arose tranquil : the traces of sorrow were indeed visible, yet only appeared to give dignity to minds of the most exalted nature.

Lord Beaumont was relieved of his anxiety respecting the fate of his unhappy father ; heaven had prevented him from shortening the days of that rash man, by whose hands he had fallen.

Violante expressed a wish to call on the worthy Laniani : it was highly approved. Lord Beaumont desired he might attend. The ladies intreated she would bring the good woman back with her, with which request her father joined.—When they approached the house, Violante alighted.

The

door was instantly opened, by the tender-hearted creature : she gazed on the lovely stranger.

“ Good heaven ! my dear Lady do I once more behold you ? ”

“ Yes, Laniani ; I am come to thank, and, if possible, discharge the obligations you have laid me under. ”

“ Name it not, Lady ; I have thought of scarce any thing else but you since the day you left me.—Who, may I be so bold, is this young gentleman ? ”

“ What, have you forgot me ? ”

“ If I mistake not, your name is Mazirire. ”

“ It was, though I lay claim to it no longer. ”

“ I presume, Sir, this lady is now your wife ? May blessings attend her ! ”

“ Not yet, Mrs. Laniani : I hope to have that honour in a few days, and insist on your spending that day with us. ”

Violante, blushing, desired her to return in the carriage with them, that she might introduce her to a father, lately discovered, who was able and desirous to reward those who had assisted his only child.

“ I shall chide my beloved, ” said her admirer ; “ Why did you not mention my worthy parent as equally determined to serve those whose tenderness you have experi-

experienced? Therefore make no denial, but return with us, and we will inform you all that has passed since the hour of this lady's leaving your abode."

She declined their invitation, till they appeared hurt. This determined her to comply.

Plain and neat was her apparel; yet her appearance would not have disgraced the most fashionable circle: innate goodness was visible in her features; a desire to make happy was the leading treat in her character.

On their arrival at Lady Beaumont's, the servant informed them, the Marquis and Father Felix had been there some time. Violante taking Mrs. Laniani by the hand, led her to the drawing-room, where she presented her to them. The ladies received her with cordial approbation, and the most polite attention. The Marquis saluted and pressed her hand to his bosom:—"Best of women," he called her. She was abashed. Father Felix caught her attention: she bowed her head. "The virtuous are welcome to this house; thy good works have proved thee a true christian;—therefore I congratulate these noble persons on the opportunity of rewarding thy merit." At this speech of the Father's, she was still more confused;
by

by degrees it wore off, and modest cheerfulness was diffused over her countenance. Violante sat next her, and drew her into conversation. The day passed most agreeably to all parties.

When Father Felix left them, he whispered the Marquis: told the ladies he had promised to endeavour to prevail on them to pay a visit to church the next morning, when they would hear some fine voices. Lady Beaumont immediately agreed to attend him.

When Mrs. Laniani chose to retire, the carriage was ordered to carry her home. The Marquis waited on her downstairs, and took that opportunity to slip a purse into her hand, with which he desired her to purchase a dress, to appear in at his daughter's wedding. A low curtesey was all the return in her power to make. They were close to the carriage.

A violent head-ach oppressed him: the ladies recommended his retiring to rest; to oblige them, he complied. Violante felt alarmed, lest her father's indisposition should increase; he kissed and blessed her; promised to breakfast with them; Soon after Lady and Mrs. Beaumont left the room, to give the lovers an opportunity of enjoying the delight of saying the fondest

fondest, truest dictates of mutual esteem and passion.—Hours fled rapidly; they were informed supper waited. Lord Beaumont muttered at being interrupted. Violante instantly arose; he led her to the ladies. The remainder of the evening passed agreeably.

The Marquis met them at breakfast; his head-ache was gone; yet he was in a visible perturbation of mind; politely he desired they would make no enquiries into the cause, as it was of no moment. They soon after got into their carriages, to attend him to church. Father Felix met them at the door; they followed into one of the private chapels, where there was a rich altar, ornamented with a crucifix; opposite was a curtain: the Marquis was desirous to have it drawn: when it was removed, there appeared a monument of parian marble: it represented a lady of exquisite beauty, in the bloom of youth: though agony appeared in her features, a faint smile was visible: she was supported by Hope, who directed her view to heaven. Her infant lay by her side, whom she embraced; she seemed near expiring. The Figure of mercy was in an attitude to receive the child from its fainting mother. The arms of the deceased were supported by cherubs. On the lower part was an
 inscrip-

inscription, expressing her name, marriage, and death; under was the word—**RESURGAM**,—in capital letters.

At that instant, a pathetic dirge was begun by several of the first performers, accompanied by a full band. The figure bore so striking a resemblance of Violante, as instantly struck them who it was designed for. She leant on her father, whose tears mingled with her's: sorrow caught all of them; nor was it diminished at the conclusion of the dirge.

Father Felix alone appeared tranquil: whilst they indulged melancholy, he was praying silently for the deceased's soul. When the music finished, they retired.

Lord Beaumont exerted himself to draw their attention from the scene they had left; he drew the Baroness into a description of her mansion, and the country adjacent; it was a copious subject, and led to many others. She said, when her children were united, her earnest wish was, that they should, in a few days, return with her to her beloved country, where she would settle every doubt respecting the indenture of her grandson; and then her thoughts would be directed to that change she must shortly expect.—The Marquis declared his readiness to comply with her wishes.

“ I shall

"I shall, my dear child, not be able to call on you to-morrow till the evening; I have accounts to settle, as it is the last Sunday I shall remain at this place. I intreat Lady Beaumont's permission to excuse my absence."

"Monday, my dear, I shall dedicate to you." [Violante coloured.] "That day will give me an inestimable treasure, which, if my actions correspond with my intentions, I shall endeavour to merit."

As Lord Beaumont finished the sentence, he pressed her hand to his lips. She intended to chide his freedom—their eyes met,—she was unable to frown,—they parted, more enamoured than ever.

When the Marquis came next evening, he informed Violante that Father Felix, at his desire, had discovered the obscure residence of her nurse; that she was unable to come so far, by a long indisposition, which affected her limbs; that he had settled a pension on her, and sent her a present relief.

"My noble father! I am unable to return proper acknowledgments for the trouble I give your generous disposition; yet believe me, I have the same sentiments, and trust they will not deviate."

A gentleman was introduced: he was

a lawyer: he brought the marriage deeds for signing: they were all ready: he read them over hastily; they then wrote their names.—Violante wrote her's, with a trembling hand; the ladies pitied her delicacy: they said the kindest things, and talked on indifferent subjects.

Mrs. Beaumont hinted they must rise early: it was sufficient: the gentlemen left them sooner than usual. Lord Beaumont besought Violante to call forth all the fortitude she could assume. She curtesied low.

The Marquis called her “ the child of his warmest wishes: do not then, my dearest girl, distress me, by finding you in a state of dejection.”

She clasped her father's hand in her's: “ My duty to you, my Lord, will support me: let me intreat you will not impute it is a fault, if my spirits fail.”

“ Heaven forbid, my love!—May its providence never forsake my Violante!”

Scarcely had the orb of day dispelled the mists from the mountains, when the domestics began their preparations; nor was it long after when the ladies entered the chamber of the bride, who they found nearly dressed, and complimented for being ready. She was in apparent hurry. They took not the least notice of it, know-

knowing it would only add to her tremors,

The Marquis and Lord Beaumont arrived. Her father saluted and Blessed her; then paid his respects to the company.

Lord Beaumont, with eyes sparkling with delight, pressed her hand to his lips, and in a low voice, uttered the fond effusions of his soul, from which transport he was recalled by his mother, who told him, he had not yet congratulated them. He paid his duty to both, and apologized for the omission; which the ladies received with a smile.

The breakfast was scarcely tasted by the bride, nor was it over when the carriages came. A paleness succeeded by flushings, instantly overspread her beauteous face; which alarmed them. In a few minutes she recovered a little resolution, and said she was ready.

The marriage being intended as private as their rank would admit only two carriages were ordered: in the first, which belonged to the Marquis, went himself, his daughter, and Mrs. Beaumont. Lady Beaumont's followed: she was accompanied by the bride-groom.

They were soon at church; all was ready; Father Felix, in his sacred vestments,

ments, received them at the altar. Violante, supported by her father, was enabled with trembling steps to walk, followed by the Lord of her wishes; she caught the observation of the holy man, who whispered her, whilst the company placed themselves, his fear she was not going to give her heart with her hand; she had only time to say, "Father, I give both."

The ceremony began; she went through it with tolerable composure, and joined in some of the prayers with fervent devotion; when it was concluded, Lord Beaumont saluted her, and bowing low to the Marquis, thanked him for his inestimable gift; he presented her to Lady and Mrs. Beaumont, who congratulated them.

The Marquis called him "Son." A silent tear ran down his cheek.—Violante observed, and discovered it was occasioned by his contemplating the tomb of her unfortunate mother. They retired from the altar. Father Felix promised to attend them at dinner.

Lord Beaumont and his bride returned in the first coach. She became more cheerful, and received the ladies and her father with a smile. What added to her satisfaction was, finding the worthy Laniant

niani waiting to receive her, dressed in handsome though plain attire, which had been sent her by the Baroness.

The good woman was going to take her in her arms, when conscious of acting improperly, she drew back.

“Excellent woman,” said the bride, and kissed her! “Never shall I forget your maternal tenderness, which preserved me from destruction.”

“Nor shall that good woman,” added the Marquis, “ever cease to remember you.”

Every one joined in praising her; Lord Beaumont in particular, took so much notice of her, as to occasion his mother, in a laughing tone, to tell him—was she his bride, it would make her jealous.

Soon after arrived father Felix: his appearance gave every one pleasure: he blessed the bride, and respectfully congratulated them all.—A sumptuous repast being ready he prayed for a benediction on it: he ate sparingly, yet thought it no crime to partake of the delicious viands; on the contrary, he detested avarice, under whatever form; and considered the tables of affluence, as instrumental in giving food to many, whose sustenance arose from the productions they reared or prepared for their superi-

ors; even when he fasted, which was not seldom, he took care his external appearance should not discover it; nor did he by assumed sanctity, banish mirth from the board: he promoted and re-animated, by some lively sally of genuine wit or observation, founded on experience, and a refined understanding.

Where every one endeavoured to make each other happy, there could be no failure of discourse; yet when he spoke, attention waited on his words, and each felt regret when he was silent.

After dinner, the Marquis said, "Father, your conversation clearly demonstrates your knowledge of the world is not derived from books; you must have been intimate with it. If I ask not an impertinent question, pray inform me the reason of your quitting it?"

"I have lived in the world, my Lord, and felt the force of every passion; ambition drew me to court, contempt and indignation broke the chain. I was desirous of riches; but grew disgusted with the pursuit.

"Many years have passed, since my becoming religious: it was owing to an unhappy passion for one who possessed every virtue; she was equally attached to me: her parents doomed her to a convent?"

vent? in vain she remonstrated! her gentle soul was not able to resist their commands; she became their victim; and soon after taking the vows, was released from them by death.

“ I was almost frantic when she entered the convent. On hearing of her decease, I became melancholy. Religion offered comfort; I found relief: I determined to devote my life to it. Heaven heard my vows. Daily do I pray for my departed Louisa, and for the hour that will, I trust, unite us for ever; till then, I endeavoured to render myself more worthy, by assisting mankind with the small knowledge I possess.”

When he had finished his short narrative, he added, gaily, “ this day is dedicated to festivity, nor will I suffer a moment longer to be obscured. I see beauty, united to merit, enjoying happiness, resulting from rectitude of conduct.”

They thanked him, and changed the discourse.

Violante's dress was tiffany, over a thin silk; it was, like her mind, of the purest white; her hair, which hung loosely in curls, had no other ornament than a hat of the same colour.

Lord Beaumont's dress was richer, yet bore no vestige of gaudy pomp.

Several unfortunate objects were this day relieved by his grandmother, who had privately desired Father Felix to dispose of a large sum, in this benevolent manner, without discovering the donor. The domestics felt the same liberality, and partook of the general joy.

Early in the evening father Felix retired. The Marquis left them at eleven.

Soon after, the ladies accompanied the blushing bride to her chamber. Her Lord, after some time, was admitted. As they possessed the purest love, no doubts remain of their being supremely happy.

A few days after their marriage, they prepared to leave Milan.—Previous to it, Lord Beaumont endeavoured to discover, and call on those he had formerly known. Mr Allegar's was his first visit;—he was at home, but did not know him. “My worthy friend, have you forgot Mazi-rine, whom you attended in prison, and received into your hospitable house?”

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed; “I now remember you, and rejoice in your change. You have often been the subject of our conversation. My wife felt interested in your welfare.”

Lord Beaumont acquainted him with the most material parts of his history; concluding,

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concluding, with a wish to be introduced to his lady.

Mr. Allegar desired her to be told a gentleman wanted to speak with her; she immediately came. Lord Beaumont introduced himself as an old acquaintance; she perceived in him the features of the youth who had been cured of a lameness by her husband; yet his present appearance was so widely different, it staggered her belief. Her husband introduced him by his title; she complimented him on his change of fortune, and rejoiced at it. He staid some time; when he took leave he intreated the lady to accept of a remembrance of his esteem: it was a ring of considerable value: then turning to her husband, "and you, Sir, will oblige me, by accepting this," presenting him a gold snuff box. They returned polite acknowledgments, and earnest wishes for a continuance of his health and happiness. He left them with regret, as it was not probable they might again meet.

He called on several of Mr. Le Merchant's friends, from whom he had received civilities. As nothing particular passed, it is needless to say more, than that he was congratulated by all, and his company highly courted. As his stay was short,

short, he could only return their attention, by desiring they would accept his excuse : should he again pay Milan a visit, their acquaintance would prove the greatest inducement.

Whilst Lord Beaumont was employed in these visits, his lady was endeavouring to find out the faithful girl who lived with Madame Le Merchant at her decease. She discovered, after many enquiries, that she was married to a journeyman statuary. She sent, and desired her to call next morning.—It was a title she had never heard. However, she told the servant she would attend. On sending in her name, Violante, or, more properly, Lady Beaumont, ordered her to be taken into her dressing-room. When she first perceived her young lady, joy prevented her from speaking.—Violante, with affability, took hold of her hand ; “ I am, my good Laura, truly glad to see you, and to hear you have married so well ; I have been equally fortunate. I had fully determined to have taken you to England. Providence has settled you here. It is my wish to assist you. Inform me how I may best do it ? ”

After a pause Laura replied,—“ Lady, our little income at present, is sufficient, for

for our wants ; in a few months I expect an increase of expences." She blushed.

Violante observed a roundness in her waist, which explained her words. " Well, Laura, as I shall not be here at that period, I desire you to retain this purse ; the contents will be found useful, and prevent any inconvenience ; and I will take care the same sum shall be remitted to you yearly."

Laura fell on her knees, and kissed the hand of her benefactress ; in humble words, she returned thanks. Lady Beaumont, fearing these emotions might prove prejudicial to her, retired, ordering whatever refreshments she would partake.

Father Felix called daily, and was earnestly intreated by the Baroness, to obtain leave of his superior to accompany them to England.—He declined it, from an idea he privately entertained, that his life was of a short duration. Finding his resolution fixed, she desired him to look out for a person, whose temper was amiable, to officiate as confessor and private chaplain. She thought it would be imprudent to dismiss her own, till every thing was settled ; then she should quit the mansion, and take him to reside with her, and leave him independent at her decease.

Father Felix immediately made the
necessary

necessary enquiries, and two days after, introduced a young priest, whose appearance was pleasing, and manners gentle.

Father James had, to oblige his parents, who, though poor, were of good extraction, taken orders; he was extremely pleased at the prospect of such a settlement;—the family so respectable the country so delightful, where he was going to remain!—They approved equally of him; and the most liberal terms were offered, which he accepted with humility.

All matters being now brought to a conclusion, the time of their leaving Milan was fixed early in the ensuing week; previous to which Mrs. Beaumont wrote to Doctor Benini an account of the marriage of her son: that she should abide by her former intentions of returning in a few months to her beloved convent, when she hoped to find him in good health, and would inform him of every particular.

Many ladies who had visited the young Lady Beaumont at Madame Le Merchant's, having heard her history, sent cards, expressive of their satisfaction and congratulations, on account of her marriage, and finding so noble a parent; concluding with intentions of paying their respects in person.—Civility made it necessary to return them cards, with polite

lite acknowledgments ; that she was unable to receive them, as she was preparing to leave Milan.

Mrs. Laniani had a handsome annuity settled on her by the Marquis, who made a liberal donation to the convent of C——. He endeavoured to find out the relations of his beloved consort ; they had left that city many years ; he was unable to trace them.

The evening previous to their departure, Violante took an affectionate leave of Father Felix, whose tears ran silently down his cheeks : her grief was audible : she knelt to receive his benediction. Lord Beaumont raised, comforted, and besought her not give way to melancholy : she leant on his bosom : the good Father chose that opportunity to retire : her mind became more calm : she arose next morning blooming as may.

They left Milan about noon, taking their route by way of Geneva, where I will take leave of them :—intreating the pardon of my readers, for detaining them thus long : earnestly wishing, should this fall into the hands of suffering innocence, or distressed merit, that the hour will soon arrive, when their sorrows may be remembered only as a tale that is told.



